

# SD 9: Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (D 16)

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Translations, essays and notes by Piya Tan ©2008

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# The Sutta Contents

## Chapter 1

### (Bareau 1) Rājagaha

1. [§1.1] **Mt Vulture Peak**, Rājagaha, about a year before the Buddha's parinirvana. The rajah **Ajāta,sattu** of Magadha plans to conquer the Vajjī confederacy.
2. [§§1.2-3] Ajātasattu sends his chief minister, the brahmin **Vassakāra**, to consult the Buddha.
3. [§§1.4-5] The Buddha speaks on **the seven conditions for a nation's welfare**.
4. [§§1.6-11] The Buddha addresses the monks on **the 7 conditions for the welfare of the spiritual community** [§1.6], the 7 good qualities, the 7 awakening-factors, the 7 perceptions, the 6 memorable qualities.
5. [§1.12] The Buddha's discourse on **the three trainings**.<sup>1</sup>

### (Bareau 2) From Rājagaha to Pāṭali,gāma

6. [§§1.13-14] **Amba,laṭṭhikā** [1.13-14], discourse on **the three trainings** [1.14].
7. [§1.15] **Nālandā**, the Buddha and order stay at the **Pāvārika mango grove**.
8. [§§1.16-17] **Sāriputta's** lion-roar of faith in the Buddha.
9. [§1.18] The Buddha's discourse on **the three trainings**.

### (Bareau 3) Pāṭali,gāma

10. [§§1.19-25] **Pāṭali,gāma**: the Buddha stays in the rest-house and receives food offerings there [§§1.19, 22], discourse on **the three trainings** [§1.21]; exhorts the audience on moral virtue [§§1.23-25].
11. [§§1.26-28] Pāṭali,gāma's fortifications; future greatness as **Pāṭali,putta** (capital of Aśoka's empire).
12. [§§1.29-30] **Sunīdha and Vassakāra**, chief ministers of Magadha, offer the Buddha and the order a meal.
13. [§§1.31-32] On **the Ganges bank**.

## Chapter 2

### (Bareau 4) Pāṭali,gāma to Vesālī

14. [§§2.1-3] **Koṭi,gāma**: The Buddha addresses the monks on **the Four Noble Truths**.
15. [§2.4] The Buddha's discourse on **the three trainings**.
16. [§§2.5-9] **Nādikā**: Ānanda asks the Buddha on the rebirth of various deceased followers [§§2.6-7]; he is taught **the Dharma Mirror** [§§2.8-9].
17. [§§2.10] The Buddha's discourse on **the three trainings**.

### (Bareau 5) Vesālī

18. [§§2.11-13] **Vesālī**: sojourn at **Amba,pālī's mango grove**; short discourse to the monks on **mindfulness and full awareness** (*sati,sampajañña*), the essence of meditation practice [§§2.12-13].
19. [§2.14] **Amba,pālī** invites the Buddha and his order for a meal on the following day.
20. [§§2.15-17] **The Licchavīs of Vaiśālī** offer Ambapālī 100,000 pieces of money to give up the meal to them [§2.15]. She turns down the offer [§§2.16-17].
21. [§2.18] The Licchavīs meet the Buddha and hear a Dharma discourse.
22. [§2.19] After the alms offering, Ambapālī donates her mango grove to the order (V 1:232).
23. [§2.20] The Buddha's discourse on **the three trainings**.

### (Bareau 6) Environs of Vesālī

24. [§§2.21-26] **Beluva**: the Buddha's last rains retreat [§§2.21-22]: the first attack of dysentery; but considering the inopportune moment, he makes an effort to recover [§§2.23-24]. The Buddha declares his openness with no secret teachings [§2.25]; admonishes the monks to take the self as refuge [§2.26].

## Chapter 3

25. [§3.1] **Vesālī** on almsround.
26. [§§3.2-6] **The Cāpāla Shrine**: the Buddha praises various shrines [§3.2]. The Buddha tells Ānanda about the possibility of extending his life span, but Ānanda does not catch the hint [§§3.3-6].
27. [§§3.7-8] Māra invites the Buddha to enter parinirvana, reminding him of his word given to Māra during the 5<sup>th</sup> week after the Great Awakening.
28. [§§3.9-37] The Buddha relinquishes the rest of his life-span [§§3.9-10]; great tremors [§§3.11-12]. The 8 causes of earth tremors [§§3.13-20], the 8 assemblies [§§3.21-23], the 8 bases for mastery [§§3.24-32], and the 8 liberations [§3.33]. The Buddha tells Ānanda of Māra's visits [§§3.34-36] and his impending parinirvana [§3.37].

<sup>1</sup> This teaching repeats at §§1.12, 1.14, 1.18, 1.21, 2.4, 2.10, 2.20, 4.4, and 4.12.

29. [§§3.38-48] Ānanda beseeches the Buddha to extend his life-span [§§3.38-40]; the Buddha rebukes him for his hesitance [§§3.41-48].

#### Chapter 4

##### (Bareau 7) Vesālī to Kusinārā

30. [§4.1] **Bhaṇḍa, gāma.** On leaving, the Buddha gives Vesālī the “elephant look.”  
 31. [§§4.2-3] “The four teachings”: *sīla, samādhi, paññā, vimutti.*  
 32. [§4.4] The Buddha’s discourse on **the three trainings.**  
 33. [§§4.5-6] Hatthi, gāma, Amba, gāma, Jambu, gāma and **Bhoga, nagara.**  
 34. [§§.7-11] The 4 great references.  
 35. [§4.12] The Buddha’s discourse on **the three trainings.**  
 36. [§§4.13-17] **Cunda the smith’s** meal to the Buddha and the order.  
 37. [§§4.18-19] *Sūkara, maddava.*  
 38. [§§4.20-21] The Buddha’s second serious attack of dysentery.  
 39. [§§4.22-25] **Kakuttha river:** Ānanda fetches water for the Buddha to drink; the water clears of itself.  
 40. [§§4.26-27] **Pukkusa Malla, putta** meets the Buddha and mentions Āḷāra Kālāma.  
 41. [§§4.28-32] The threshing-house at **Ātumā:** the Buddha’s deep meditation.  
 42. [§§4.33-34] Pukkusa the last layman before the Buddha.  
 43. [§§4.35-38] The Buddha’s transfiguration.  
 44. [§§4.39-41] The elder Cundaka attends to the Buddha.  
 45. [§§4.42-43] The exoneration of Cunda: the two most meritorious meals of the Buddha.

#### Chapter 5

##### (Bareau 8) Kusinārā: The last moments

46. [§§5.1-3] **Kusinārā:** Upavattana sal grove. The Buddha lies down between the twin sal trees. Widespread miracles, but the Buddha speaks of the “supreme worship,” that is, one’s spiritual practice.  
 47. [§§5.4-6] **Upavāṇa,** fanning the Buddha, is told to move aside because devatas are trying to gaze at the Buddha in his last moments. The less developed devatas lament.  
 48. [§§5.7-8] Ānanda asks how monks in the future could “see” the Buddha; **the four holy places.**  
 49. [§5.9] Ānanda asks about how monks should treat **women.**  
 50. [§§5.10-11] How **the bodily remains of the Buddha** should be treated. The Buddha admonishes Ānanda not to trouble himself with the funeral rites, which should be left to the laity.  
 51. [§5.12] **The four people worthy of a stupa.**  
 52. [§§5.13-16] **Ānanda’s grief;** the Buddha consoles him by way of a valediction, and speaks of Ānanda’s charisma.  
 53. [§§5.17-18] The Buddha speaks of Kusinārā’s glorious past as **Kusā, vatī.**  
 54. [§§5.19-22] Ānanda announces the Buddha’s impending parinirvana to **the Mallas.** They lament.  
 55. [§§5.23-30] **Subhadda** the last convert is ordained by the Buddha and becomes an arhat.

#### Chapter 6

56. [§6.1] **The Buddha’s last instructions.** The Dharma-Vinaya as teacher after the Buddha’s parinirvana.  
 57. [§6.2] Monks are to address each other according to **seniority.**  
 58. [§6.3] The order may abrogate **the lesser and minor rules.**  
 59. [§6.4] The Buddha imposes the supreme penalty on **Channa.**  
 60. [§§6.5-7] **The Buddha’s last words:** “All formations are of the nature to decay—strive on heedfully!”  
 61. [§§6.8-10a] The Buddha’s **parinirvana process.** Anuruddha explains the process to Ānanda.  
 62. [§§6.10b] The four verses: Brahmā Sahampati, Sakra, Anuruddha, Ānanda.  
 63. [§§6.10c-11] The monks and devas lament.

##### (Bareau 9) Kusinārā: The last rites

64. [§6.12] Ānanda announces the Buddha’s parinirvana to the Mallas of Kusinārā; they lament, and prepare for the Buddha’s last rites.  
 65. [§§6.13-16] They honour the Buddha’s remains for 7 days.  
 66. [§§6.17-18] Cremation preparations: Ānanda instructs the Mallas.  
 67. [§6.19] **Mahā Kassapa** traveling between Pāvā and Kusinārā learns of the Buddha’s parinirvana.  
 68. [§6.20] The old Subhadda utters his infamous statement.  
 69. [§§6.21-23a] Four Malla chiefs fail to light the Buddha’s pyre. Mahā Kassapa arrives, and after he and his entourage have paid their last respects, the Buddha’s pyre burst into flames.  
 70. [§§6.23b-28] Eight claimants ask for **the Buddha’s relics.** Dona proposes they be equally distributed.

# Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta

The Discourse on the Great Parinirvana | D 16/2:72-168

Theme: The last days of the Buddha

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003, rev & enl 2004; 3<sup>rd</sup> rev ed 2008

[Note prefixes: “§” before a number refers to passages in the Sutta itself. “Intro” refers to an Introduction section.” “Comy” here usually refers to the Commentarial Notes at the end of this chapter. A parenthesized cross-reference without a prefix, eg [8], refers to the section in the same chapter.]

## 1 Significance of the Sutta

Although the fullest account of the Buddha’s last year is recorded in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (D 16),<sup>2</sup> episodes and sections of it are found elsewhere in the Canon [3]. The two discourses following it in the Dīgha—the Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17) and the Jana,vasabha Sutta (D 18)—give detailed accounts of related events. The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta records the Buddha’s reason for choosing Kusinārā, a “remote jungle township,” to spend his last days, that is, it was the capital of an great ancient king Sudassana [§5.17-18]. His story is told in detail in **the Mahā Sudassana Sutta** (D 17), which apparently is meant for the laity, as it speaks of the king’s greatness as being due to generosity (*dāna*), self-control (*dama*), and self-restraint (*saṃyama*).<sup>3</sup>

While the Buddha is residing in the Brick House at Nādikā, it is said that the yaksha Jana,vasabha, appears to the Buddha and declares that he was previous king Bimbisāra, now reborn in a host of Vessavana, one of the four kings of the quarters (the north) [§§2.5-7]. The full account is given in **the Jana,vasabha Sutta** (D 18).<sup>4</sup> Various accounts of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta are also found elsewhere in the Canon [2].

Even on its own, the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta is a remarkable narrative work and is the longest of all extant ancient Indian literary compositions [2]. Scholars have noted the sutta’s uniqueness, for example,

It is neither a dialogue nor a speech on one or more chief points of doctrine, but a continuous record of the latter part of Buddha’s life, his last speeches and sayings, and his death... the sutta is by no means a unified work, but is composed of parts which belong to different ages. At a very early period—probably soon after the death of Buddha—there must already have been a short “Sutta of the perfect Nirvāna (of the Buddha),” which, by means of interpolations and additions, grew longer and longer in the course of time, till it became the “*great* Sutta of the perfect Nirvāna” which we now have in our Pāli Canon.

(Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature* 2, 1972:39; cf 41 f)

In his article, “The Traditional Date of Kanishka,”<sup>5</sup> J F Fleet tries to show that the sutta could not have been composed later than 375 BCE, but Winternitz “believe[s] that the final redaction must be a good deal later” (1972:41 n3).

The greatest benefit and satisfaction comes from studying this work right through the first time as one would read a novel or listen to an ancient mythical story or watch a space epic movie (like the Star Wars series). Then one should read through it again and note the episodes and sections that interest one for a better grasp of them. And on a third reading, one should reflect on the Dharma teachings given in it. Here is a table of contents of this remarkable work, with the headings for the nine sections worked out by André Bareaux [5]:

The Mahā Parinibbāna is not the usual Pali sutta. No central doctrine is found in it, and it has a cast of thousands, encompassing both earth and heaven. In fact, a famous Japanese drawing depicts the final scene of the Buddha at Kusinārā with not only the gods and humans, but also animals, mourning the Buddha’s passing. The Buddha begins to assume otherworldly qualities in this Sutta; for example, he is said to have the power to live through the world-cycle [§3.3] and he transfigures himself [§4.37]. In short, it

<sup>2</sup> D 16/2:72-168 = SD 9.

<sup>3</sup> D 17/2:169-199 = SD 36.12.

<sup>4</sup> D 18/2:200-219 = SD 62.3.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1906:979-992.



might be said that, by way of style, the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta is more Mahāyāna than Theravāda. Yet, behind and beyond such attempts at mythification, we see a warm and wise human teacher profoundly concerned with ensuring that the faith will be well kept after his passing.

## 2 The longest ancient Indian work

The final year of the Buddha's life is variously recorded in some detail in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (D 16), the Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17) and the Jana,vasabha Sutta (D 18). The most details, however, are found in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, "the Great Discourse on the Parinirvana [final nirvana]"<sup>6</sup> (D 16/2:72-167) by itself is the longest of all the Buddhist texts (96 pages of Pali text in the PTS edition), indeed, the longest of all ancient Indian literary compositions still extant. For even though there are longer Indian texts, such as the Brāhmaṇas, these are compiled from small, independent pieces, while the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta "is built according to a uniform plan" (Hinuber 1996: 31).

Furthermore, it forms *the hub of at least three other long discourses*, that is, the two Dīgha Nikāya suttas that immediately follow: the Mahā Sudassana Sutta ("the Discourse on Mahā Sudassana," D 17) and the Jana,vasabha Sutta ("the Discourse on Jana,vasabha," D 18); and also the Sampasādanīya Sutta "the Discourse that Inspires".<sup>7</sup> These four suttas are expansions on passages from the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, as follows:

| <u>Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta</u> |                 | <u>expanded as</u>   |                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| D 16.1.16/2:81                | (Āmba,laṭṭhikā) | Sampasādanīya Sutta  | (D 28 = S 47.2)   |
| D 16.2.5-7/2:91-93            | (Nāḍikā)        | Jana,vasabha Sutta   | (D 18)            |
| D 16.3.49/2:119               | (Great Wood)    | Kaliṅgara Sutta      | (S 20.8/2:267 f.) |
| D 16.5.17-18/2:146 f          | (Kusinārā)      | Mahā Sudassana Sutta | (D 17)            |

Although the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta is in many respects the most important discourse in the Dīgha Nikāya, it differs essentially in form and contents from all the other Pali suttas. It is neither a dialogue nor a discourse on any single doctrine, but a long record, albeit not always continuous, of **the Buddha's last days** and his parinirvana. Although it forms the literary hub of at least three other suttas, it is not (as a whole) the oldest in the collection. Only some parts of it can be regarded as ancient and original. The Sutta clearly has more than one author, and it gradually from an ancient core until its final redaction.

**The title**, Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, can be translated in at least two ways: either as "the Discourse on the Great Parinirvana" or "the Great Discourse on the Parinirvana." However, it is clear here that the former is the only correct one for two reasons. Firstly, if we translate it as "the Great Discourse," there should be an accompanying "Cūḷa Parinibbāna Sutta" (the Lesser Discourse on the Parinirvana," but there is none. Secondly, *mahā* being affixed to *parinibbāna* clearly qualifies that it as "the great parinirvana," signifying that it is *the Buddha's* final passing.<sup>8</sup>

The Korean specialist on the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, **An Yang-Gyu**, in closing his paper, "The date and the origin of the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta," presents this working thesis, first postulated by Winter-nitz (1933:39):

- (1) The Proto-MPS<sup>9</sup> was recited soon after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*.
- (2) In due course, the Proto-MPS took in new elements required by the later traditions.
- (3) This intermediate MPS [Deutero-MPS] was growing into the MPS which was quite close to the present version with 100 years after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*.
- (4) The final redaction of MPS as we have it is made as late as the third council.

These tentative ideas, says An, "are subject to the further investigations in two ways: (1) comparing all the versions of MPS; (2) fixing the dates of the passages of MPS which record historical events" (2001: 73).

<sup>6</sup> On the problem of the translation of *parinibbāna* and *nibbāna*, see K R Norman, "Mistaken Ideas about *Nibbāna*," *The Buddhist Forum*, vol 3, 1995:211-225. A summary of the discussion is given in section §13 here.

<sup>7</sup> D 28, S 47.2/5:159-161; cf J 5:443.

<sup>8</sup> On the prefixes *mahā* and *cūḷa* (or *culla*) in sutta names, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22, M 10) @ SD 13.1 (2).

<sup>9</sup> MPS = Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta or Mahā,parinirvāṇa Sūtra (only in this study).

### 3 Composition of the sutta

Scholars<sup>10</sup> widely agree that the text of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta—generally referred to its Sanskrit name of **the Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra**—underwent a gradual process of development, and “various attempts have been made to separate out diverse strata in the text on the basis of comparative study of different textual traditions, building on the basic assumption about the nature of ‘primitive’ Buddhism and the evolution of Buddhist cultic life” (Trainor 1997:46).<sup>11</sup> Waldschmidt distinguishes 51 episodes and classifies them into four groups. He regards the first group, containing episodes reproduced in substantially the same way in the majority of the sources, as the oldest.<sup>12</sup> André Bareau has reconstructed a detailed relative chronology of the sutta episodes. He thinks that the section recounting the Buddha’s last hours, his final admonitions and his passing away to be the earliest portion, the sutta kernel (1979:49).<sup>13</sup>

At some very early period, probably soon after the Buddha’s passing, there was a **short Parinibbāna Sutta**, which, “by means of interpolations and additions, grew longer and longer in the course of time, till it became the ‘great Sutta of the perfect nirvana’ which we now have in our Pali Canon” (Winternitz 1933: 39). Winternitz distinguishes five strata in the sutta (1911:1148 ff). According to him, those “ancient and original” sections of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, besides the verses which “bear the stamp of the greatest antiquity,” are as follows (listed according to chapter and section) (1933 id):

- 2.23 The first illness that befalls the Buddha at **Beluva** and which he overcomes by sheer will.
- 2.25 He assures **Ānanda** that he does not have a guru’s “closed fist,” and that he has never seen himself as a leader of the order.
- 5.13 f **Ānanda’s grief** at the Buddha’s impending departure and consolation by the Buddha.

**T W Rhys Davids** has made a concordance of sources of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta in his Introduction to his translation (D:RD 2:71 f.). All of the 96 pages of the Pali text, with the exception of nine gaps (the original materials)—pp 92 f; 113-115; 117-121; 130-133; 137-140; 148-150; 153; 158-160; 164-167—are found, in nearly identical words, elsewhere in the Canon.

#### THE ORIGINAL MATERIALS, UNIQUE TO THE SUTTA

- |              |               |  |
|--------------|---------------|--|
| (1) §2.10-11 | (D 2:92-93)   | The Brick House & Ambapālī’s Grove (mention of location only).   |
| (2) §3.34-42 | (D 2:113-115) | The Buddha tells Ānanda about Māra’s approaches in the past and in the present; the parinirvana in 3 months’ time; Ānanda’s belated request & the Buddha’s rebuke. |
| (3) §3.44-51 | (D 2:117-121) | Rebuke of Ānanda continues; the Hall of the Gabled House; public announcement of the parinirvana in 3 months’ time.  |
| (4) §4.26-38 | (D 2:130-133) | Pukkusa presents the golden robes.   |
| (5) §5.1-11  | (D 2:137-140) | The sal grove; Upavāṇa; devas’ lamentation; the 4 holy places; attitude to women; the Tathāgata’s remains.   |
| (6) §5.19-26 | (D 2:148-150) | The impending parinirvana announced to the Mallas, who then visit the Buddha; Subhadda.  |
| (7) §5.29-30 | (D 2:153)     | Subhadda’s ordination.   |
| (8) §6.11-15 | (D 2:158-160) | Anuruddha consoles Ānanda, instructs Ānanda to announce the Buddha’s passing to the Mallas; laying in state.   |
| (9) §6.21-26 | (D 2:176-167) | The cremation and division of relics.  |

<sup>10</sup> A Bareau, *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha* (1970-71) & “La Composition et la étapes de la formation progressive du *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* ancient,” 1979:45-103; Przulski, “Le Partage des reliques du Buddha,” 1935-36:341-367; M Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, 1983 2:38 ff; Ernst Waldschmidt (see biblio); and GC Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, rev ed 1974:98-106.

<sup>11</sup> G Schopen notes that the Pāli MSS are from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while the Skt MSS from Turfan date many centuries earlier. See Schopen “Two problems in the history of Indian Buddhism” in 1997:23-55 (ch 2).

<sup>12</sup> Qu by Lamotte 1988a:650 f; cf 587.

<sup>13</sup> See this Intro [§5] for “Bareau’s analyses” & Reginald Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India*, 1994:386 f.



The original materials amount altogether about 32 or 33 pages, that is, about one-third of the whole. That proportion, Rhys Davids notes, “would be reduced if we were to include passages of similar tendency, or passages of shorter length” (D:RD 2:71). Rhys Davids has worked out a list of those passages that are found in other parts of the Canon (see following page).

**CONCORDANCE OF SOURCES OF THE MAHĀ PARINIBBĀNA SUTTA  
(TW RHYS DAVIDS)**

[My remarks and additions are within parentheses. The leftmost number sequence refers to the sections in Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, ch 10.]

|     | <u>ch</u> | <u>section</u> | <u>page</u> | <u>Other old Pali texts</u>                                    |
|-----|-----------|----------------|-------------|--|
| 1   | <b>1</b>  | §1-10          | 72-80       | A 4:16-24  |
| 2   |           | §16, 17        | 81-83       | D 28 & S 5:159-161   |
| 3   |           | §20-34         | 84-89       | U 8.6 & V 1:227 (elaborated); [D 3:209; M 1:354; S 4:183]      |
| 4   | <b>2</b>  | §2, 3          | 90, 91      | S 5:431, V 1:230 f & Nett 166                                  |
| [   |           | §6-9           | 91-94       | S 55.8/5:356 f   |
|     |           | §6-9           | 92 f.       | S 55.10/5:358-360]   |
| 5   |           | §12-13         | 94, 95      | [S 47.2/5:142;] in S 36.6/4:211                                |
| 6   |           | §14-19         | 95-98       | V 1:231-233 (differs as to location.)                          |
| 7   |           | §22-26         | 98-101      | S 5:151-154  |
|     |           | §26            | 100 f       | S 3:42 f, 5:163, 164 (all different venues and interlocutors.) |
| 8   | <b>3</b>  | §1-20          | 102-109     | A 4:308-313  |
| 9   |           | §1-10          | 102-107     | S 5:259-263 & U 6.1; [Nett 60]                                 |
| 10  |           | §21-23         | 109, 110    | A 4:30 (nearly = M 1:72)                                       |
| 11  |           | §24-32         | 110, 111    | A 4:305 & 349; M 2:13, 14                                      |
| 12  |           | §33            | 111, 112    | D 2:70, 71; A 4:306 & 349                                      |
| 13  |           | §43            | 116         | Quoted Kvu 559   |
| 14  | <b>4</b>  | §2, 3          | 122, 123    | A 2:1 f & A 4:105 (quoted Kvu 115, different application.)     |
| 15  |           | §7-22          | 123-126     | A 2:167-170  |
| 16  |           | §13-25         | 126-129     | U 8.5  |
| [   |           | §30            | 131         | V 1:249 f (related story of “one gone forth in old age”).]     |
| 17  |           | §39-43         | 134-136     | U 8.5  |
| [   | <b>5</b>  | §4             | 138         | D 3:141 (possibly on another occasion)]                        |
| [   |           | §8             | 140         | A 2:120 f]   |
| 18  |           | §11            | 141, 142    | D 2:161  |
| 19  |           | §12            | 142, 143    | A 2:245, 246   |
| 20  |           | §15            | 144         | S 5:16 (nearly); [A 2:132]                                     |
| 21  |           | §16            | 145, 146    | A 2:133  |
| 22  |           | §17, 18        | 146, 147    | D 2:169, 170   |
| 23  |           | §27            | 151         | Quoted Kvu 601   |
| 24  |           | §28            | 152         | D 1:176; M 1:391, 494; S 2:21; V 1:69, 71                      |
| [   | <b>6</b>  | §1             | 154         | cf S 6.2/1:138-140]  |
| 25  |           | §5             | 154, 155    | A 2:79, 80   |
| 26  |           | §7-10          | 155-158     | S 1:157-159 (differs as to order of stanzas.)                  |
| 27  |           | §9             | 156         | A 4:410 ff.  |
| 28  |           | §10            | 157         | Tha 905, 1046; A 1:236   |
| 29  |           | §17            | 161         | D 2:141, 142   |
| 30  |           | §19-20         | 162, 163    | V 2:284, 285 (differs as to order of sentences.)               |
| 31  |           | §27            | 167         | (end of text)  |
| [32 |           | §28            | 168         | Buddhaghosa attributes to Sinhalese elders.] (D:R 2:72)        |

Rhys Davids also notes that “the slight differences, the more important of which are noted in the table, are very suggestive,” that is, No. 26 (the episode of the stanzas uttered at the moment of the Buddha’s death), No. 14 (a four-line verse attributed to the Buddha in our sutta but also found in the *Āṅguttara*), and No. 30 (the old Subhadra’s callous remark after the Buddha’s passing)—which are discussed at length in the Introduction to his translation of the sutta. (Rhys Davids, 1938:73 ff.)

#### 4 Text and recensions

**(4a) CHRONOLOGY OF THE PALI CANON.** An important point to note here is that all the parallel passages mentioned here, without exception, unlike the original passages, belong to the oldest strata of the Canon. In his *Buddhist India* (London, 1903:188), TW Rhys Davids gives the following interesting chronology of the Pali Canon.

#### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF BUDDHIST LITERATURE FROM THE BUDDHA’S TIME TO THE TIME OF AŚOKA

1. The simple statements of Buddhist doctrine now found, in identical words, in paragraphs or verses recurring in all the books.
2. Episodes found in identical words, in two or more of the existing books.
3. The *Sīlas*, the *Pārāyaṇa*, the Octades [*Aṭṭhaka*] and *Samyutta Nikāyas*.
4. The *Dīgha*, *Majjhima*, *Āṅguttara* and *Samyutta Nikāyas*.
5. The *Sutta Nipāta*, the Thera- and Therī-gāthās, the *Udānas*, and the *Khuddaka Pāṭha*.
6. The *Sutta Vibhaṅga* and the *Khandhakas* [of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*].
7. The *Jātakas* and the *Dhammapadas*.
8. The *Niddesa*, the *Itivuttakas*, and the *Paṭisambhidā*.
9. The *Peta, vatthu* and *Vimāna, vatthu*, the *Apadānas*, the *Cariyā, piṭaka*, and the *Buddha, vaṃsa*.
10. The *Abhidhamma* books; the last of which is the *Kathā Vatthu*, and the earliest probably the *Puggala Paññatti*.

The above table represents the probable order in which the extant Buddhist documents of this period were composed. They were not yet written down, and a great deal has no doubt been lost.

(T W Rhys Davids, 1903:18)

All these passages belong to the two earliest groups. All are found in books included in groups 4-6; not one occurs in any of the books included in later groups—groups 7-10.

**(4b) RECENSIONS OF THE SUTTA.** The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta is available in six main recensions. The Pali version is also preserved in the Taishō Tripiṭaka (T 1 ch 2-4 p 11-30). Other Chinese versions are T 5 (diverges from the Pali), T 6 and T 7 (both closer); T 1451 ch 35-38, pp 382b-402c. The Sanskrit version, *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, belonging to the Mūla, sarvāstivāda, has been edited by Ernst Waldschmidt (1950-51),<sup>14</sup> who also gives the parallel texts from the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya in the Tibetan (Dulva 11:535b-652b) and Chinese (one Dharma, guptaka, three of unknown origins).<sup>15</sup> The French scholar André Barreau and other scholars think that

the unanimous attestation of the six versions for a given passage indicates that it goes back to a period before the sectarian divisions that took place approximately 100-150 years after the

<sup>14</sup> Abhandlungen DAWB, Phil. Hist. K1, 1950 and K1. f. Spr., Lit. und Kunst, 2 parts; *Das Mahāparinirvānasūtra*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1950-51. Waldschmidt arranges the 51 episodes of **Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra** in 4 classifications: (1) episodes reproduced substantially the same way in the majority of sources; (2) episodes related to the majority of versions, but in a different way; (3) episodes attested to in only a small number of sources; (4) episodes attested to in a single version. “If an authentic tradition ever exists, in the course of time it was subjected to considerable alterations. It is represented more faithfully, it seems, by the Sanskrit version than by the Pāli one” (Lamotte 1988a:650 f).

<sup>15</sup> The Tibetan version is also found in mDo 8:1-231 (*Mahā Parinirvāna Sūtra*) and mDo 8:231-234, and the section called *Myang-hds* or *Nirvāna* in 2 volumes.

Buddha's death. On the basis of the substantial agreement among the six parallel versions, several scholars have concluded that much of the [Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra] dates back to a period before the sectarian fragmentation of the saṅgha and its subsequent geographical dispersion in the Aśokan period and following.<sup>16</sup> (Trainor 1997:47)

A Sarvāstivāda version is found in the **Gilgit Manuscripts** (ed N Dutt et al, 1939-50), volume 3, page 415. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. **Jean Przyluski** made a comparative of various Mahā Parinirvāṇa texts in his "Le Parinirvana et le Funérailles du Bouddha" (*Journal Asiatique* 1918-20). Recently, **Mark Allon and Richard Salomon** discovered and published a Gandhārī version of the sutta.<sup>17</sup>

**A K Warder**, in his *Indian Buddhism* (1970:67-80), gives his own translation of the Pali version "omitting anything not confirmed by other versions. The main episodes are translated, with a minimum of comment and continuity." **W Pachow** has compared these four versions of the Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra with the Pali version, namely:<sup>18</sup>

- I:P *Buddha, parinirvāṇa Sūtra*. Nanjio no 552 tr Po-Fa-Tsu, 290-306 CE, Western Chin, 265-316. 2 fascicles.
- II:B *Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra of the Dīrgh'āgama Sūtra*. Nanjio no 545 (2) tr Buddha, yaśas and Chu Fonien, 412-413, of the Later Chin, 384-417. 3 fascicles.
- III:N *Parinirvāṇa Sūtra* or *Vaipulya Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. Nanjio no 119, tr unknown, Eastern Chin, 317-420. 2 fascicles.
- IV:F *Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra*. Nanjio no 118, tr Fa-hsien [Faxian] of Eastern Chin, 317-420. 3 fascicles.

**T W Rhys Davids'** translation of the sutta is found in volume 2 of his *Dīgha Nikāya* translation, *Dialogues of the Buddha*.<sup>19</sup> The Tibetan version from the *Dulva* (Vinaya) has been translated by **WW Rockhill** in *The Life of the Buddha* (1884:122-147). Recent translations include one by **Maurice Walshe**, in his *Long Discourses of the Buddha* (1995, D:W 223-277). In 1972, **Ñāṇamoli** published his *The Life of the Buddha According to the Pali Canon* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed 1992: ch 15), the closing chapter of which deals with "the last year" of the Buddha's life. **Vajirā and Francis Story** have produced a revised translation ("Last Days of the Buddha," 1998), while **Thanissaro** has translated the last two chapters ("The Great Discourse on the Total Unbinding," rev ed 2002). The last two are available online.<sup>20</sup> Recently, the Dīgha Commentary on the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta has been translated by **An Yang-Gyu** (from Korea) as *The Buddha's Last Days: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Mahāparinibbāna* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2003).

## 5 Bareau's analyses

André Bareau,<sup>21</sup> the French scholar, has done extensive study of the historical and doctrinal relationships between the six parallel versions of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta in several studies.<sup>22</sup> Bareau's detailed analysis of the Parinirvana traditions also takes account of additional Chinese translations of further recensions of the same material: the Dharma, guptaka *Dīrgh'āgama* (tr Buddhayaśas & Chu Fonian, 412-

<sup>16</sup> See Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, 1974:12; Snellgrove (ed), *The Image of the Buddha*, 1978:18.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Allon & Richard Salomon (eds), "Fragments of a Gandhārī Version of the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra in the Schøyen Collection." 2000:243-73.

<sup>18</sup> *Sino-Indian Studies* 1,4 July 1945. See also Nanjio nos 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 542 and 1121. Also a Chinese tr (ed Carlo Puini), *Giornale della Societa Asiatica Italiana* 21, 1908:59 ff & 22, 1909:1 ff. See also E Windisch, *Māra und Buddha*, Leipzig, 1895:33 ff; H Oldenberg, in *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 53, 1899:121 ff; and J Edkins, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1881:66 f. See here §5 n on Bareau's trs.

<sup>19</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1938, 4<sup>th</sup> ed 1959, D:R 2:71-191.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/digha>.

<sup>21</sup> *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha* (1970=71) & "La Composition et la étapes de la formation progressive du Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra ancien," 1979:45-103. Other important studies of the text include: Przyluski, "Le Partage des reliques du Buddha," 1935-36:341-367; M Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, 1983 2:38 ff; Ernst Waldschmidt (see biblio); and GC Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, rev ed 1974:98-106.

<sup>22</sup> 1962, 1963, 1970-71, 1974, 1975, 1979.

413 CE) = A; *Buddha, nirvāna Sūtra* (tr Po Fa-tsou, 290-306 CE) = B; *Parinirvāṇa Sūtra* (tr 317-402 CE) = C; *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (tr Faxian, 417 CE) = D.<sup>23</sup>

His major contribution to the study of our text is in 1979, when Bareau examines and compares the six principal recensions of the sutta—one version each in Pāli and Sanskrit, and four in Chinese and concludes—and concludes that our text formed gradually over several centuries. The number and order of the episodes vary in the different versions, and less than half are found in all six versions. Nevertheless, an analysis of the six versions show (1979:46):

- (1) that there is a common plan among them;
- (2) that the texts share certain central episodes; and
- (3) that the principal episodes almost always appear in the same order.

The Sutta in its various versions contains a total of over 80 episodes, an analysis of which shows a relative chronology in which these episodes were added. This however does not tell us the order in each individual unit came into existence.

Bareau suggests in “a fragile enough hypothesis” an absolute chronology, in which he locates the addition of the texts to the sutta over some 400 years from the parinirvana (c 480 CE) to the beginning of the Common Era (1979:47). Bareau regards the account of the last hours of the Buddha’s life, his final instructions and his parinirvana as the historical “kernel” of the text compiled within several decades of the Buddha’s passing (1979:50). He dates the passages specifying the four holy places and the four persons worthy of a stupa much later, to a period between the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE (1979:69). This conclusion is based on the fact that these passages do not occur in all six extant versions of the text, and that they appear to assume a developed Buddhology (when the Buddha appears no longer to be considered as just a human being) (1979:63).<sup>24</sup>

As Bareau<sup>25</sup> sees it, the sutta may be divided into **9 major sections**, according to locale of the incidents, and these may in turn be divided into two major groupings, as follows (1979:48) [with my own section headings—in *The Buddha and His Disciples* (Piya Tan, 2004)—here listed in parentheses]:

### **Bareau’s Nine Sections**

#### A. Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta §§1-2.20 (Later half)

- |                                  |            |          |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------|
| (1) In the environs of Rājagṛha  | [§1.1-12]  | [Piya 2] |
| (2) From Rājagṛha to Pāṭaligrāma | [§1.13-18] | [Piya 3] |
| (3) At Pāṭaligrāma               | [§1.19-32] | [Piya 4] |
| (4) From Pāṭaligrāma to Vaiśālī  | [§2.1-10]  | [Piya 5] |
| (5) At Vaiśālī                   | [§2.11-20] | [Piya 6] |

#### B. Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta §§2.21-6.26 (Older half)

- |                                    |              |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| (6) In the environs of Vaiśālī     | [§2.21-3.48] | [Piya 7-11]  |
| (7) From Vaiśālī to Kuśinagarī     | [§4.1-43]    | [Piya 12-15] |
| (8) At Kuśinagarī: the final hours | [§5.1-6.11]  | [Piya 16-21] |
| (9) At Kuśinagarī: the last rites  | [§6.12-26]   | [Piya 22].   |

Sections 6-9 form the older sections, while sections 1-5 are later. Bareau proposes that the oldest section—“the kernel of the work”—is section 8 (The final hours of the Buddha at Kuśinagarī). Following this are sections 9, then 6, then 7 and then the newer sections (1979:50 f.). The oldest part of the text, section 8, minus some episodes added later, according to Bareau, is dated to **the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> See *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha* 1970, 2:4.

<sup>24</sup> G Schopen has objected to this methodology that is based on the basic principle that textual unanimity is a sure sign of an early date of composition. He notes that first of all scholars differ regarding the date of sectarian division, and that there is no inscriptional evidence of sectarian division before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE (“Two problems in the history of Indian Buddhism,” 1997:26). Conversely, Schopen proposes that precisely the opposite conclusion should be drawn, ie, that unanimous attestation indicates a late date of composition based on an extended period of harmonization between the sects (op cit, 1997:17).

<sup>25</sup> See Reginald Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India*, 1994:386 f. See also “Sutta Contents” above.

**century BCE.** The next section were added from this time onward, with the latest sections (1-5) added in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE (1979:51).<sup>26</sup>

Bareau also discusses the development of relic worship after the Buddha's passing.<sup>27</sup>

## 6 Island or lamp?

**(6a) ATTA, DĪPA.** The most famous and memorable passage from the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, also found in a number of other places in the Canon, is clearly this:

*Tasmā-t-ih 'Ānanda attā,dīpā viharatha attā,saraṇā anañña,saraṇā, dhammā,dīpā dhammā,-saraṇā anañña,saraṇā* [§2.26].<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, Ānanda, dwel with yourself as an island, with yourself as refuge, with no other refuge—dwel with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as refuge, with no other refuge.

(D 16.2.26/2:100 f = 26.1/3:58, 26.27/77; S 22.43/3:42, 47.9/5:154, 47.13/5:163, 17.14/5:164)

The Commentary explains *atta,dīpā* as “dwell, having made the self [yourself like an island in the great ocean] (*mahā,samudda,gata,dīpaṃ viya attānaṃ dīpaṃ patiṭṭhitāṃ katvā viharatha*, DA 2:548, SA 2:268, 3:204).<sup>29</sup> It is interesting that the Commentary uses the plural *attānaṃ* though this is not apparent in the textual compound *atta,dīpā*.

The Sutta Nipāta Commentary on *atta,dīpā* in the line “who wander about the world,” *ye attā,dīpā vicaranti loke* (Sn 501) of **the Māgha Sutta** (Sn 5.3) explains, “by their own virtue, having made the self an island, they wander as those influx-free, they say” (*attano guṇe eva attano dīpaṃ katvā vicarantā khīṇāsavā vuccanti*, SnA 2:416). The Dīgha Commentary further explains “What is meant by ‘self’? The mundane and supramundane Dhamma (*lokiya,lokuttaro dhammo*).<sup>30</sup> Therefore he says next, ‘with the Dharma as an island,’ etc” (DA 3:846; SA 2:268). **Bhikkhu Bodhi** notes here that “This comment overlooks the obvious point that the Buddha is inculcating self-reliance.” (S:B 1:1055 n53). The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta explains the expression to “dwell with yourself as an island” as referring to the practice of satipatthana [§2.26].

Some scholars, however, have rendered *dīpa* here as “light”—Rhys Davids (D:R 2:110), Fausböll (Sn:F 501)—or as “lamp” (Adikaram and Childers), probably because they are influenced by the Western saying “No man is an island” and its negative connotation. The existence of two ancient Buddhist languages, Pali and Sanskrit, provides a dynamic stereoscopic panorama of Buddhism. It helps us to clear a problem in the interpretation of this famous passage from the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta [§2.26]:

**6a.1 Sanskrit.** The Sanskrit words *dīpa* (light, lamp) and *dvīpa* (island, continent) are both rendered as *dīpa* in Pali. The Sanskritized passage of the Buddha's last words (D 2:100) are found in the Mahāvastu, giving *dvīpa*:

*ātma,dvīpa bhikṣavo viharatha ananya,dvīpāḥ ātmaśaraṇāḥ ananya,śaraṇāḥ*

(Senart, *Le Mahavastu* 1: 334)

The same Sanskrit word is found in the Turfan version of the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra (Waldschmidt 200).

The **Gāndhārī Dharmapada** also renders the term *dīpa* as “island” (Brough 209 f.). **The Tibetan translation** also uses “island” (*glin*), and not “a light of lamp” (*mar me*).

<sup>26</sup> For other details, see Ray, 1994:386 n2 which I have summarized here.

<sup>27</sup> See this Intro (7d).

<sup>28</sup> Lit “Therefore, Ānanda, dwell with yourselves as islands, with yourselves as refuges, with no other refuges—dwell with the Dharma as islands, with the Dharma as refuges, with no other refuges.” I have generally tr *dhammā,-dīpa* etc, adverbially guided by the spirit of self-reliance. Cf *yo kho Vakkali dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati*, etc. S 3:120.

<sup>29</sup> Comy to **Cakkavatti Sihanāda S** (D 26.1/3:58) explains the meaning of *atta,dīpa* as “dwell, having established yourselves as an island, a shelter, a cave [refuge] for crossing over birth (*gati*)” (*attānaṃ dīpaṃ tānaṃ leṇaṃ gatiṃ parāyaṇaṃ patiṭṭhitāṃ katvā viharathā it attho*, DA 2:846).

<sup>30</sup> “Mundane states” (*lokiya,dhammā*) are all those states of consciousness and mental factors arising in an ordinary worldling or in a saint, but are not associated with the supramundane. “Supramundane states” (*lokuttara,dhammā*) are the four paths, the four fruitions and nirvana.



**6a.2 Chinese mistranslation.** Zhu Fo Nian (Former Chin 351-394) rendered it as “a light” (T 1: 15b). Saṅghadeva (Later Chin 384-417) rendered it as “a lamp-light” in the Mādhy’āgama: “Make yourself a lamp-light” (T 1:645c). The Chinese Dharmapada (25, 238) also uses “light” (pointed out by PV Bapat).

However, **Guṇabhadra** (Liu Sung dynasty 420-479) rendered *dīpa* as “island” in his translation of the same passage in the Saṃyukt’āgama (T 2.8a).<sup>31</sup>

**(6b) THE “ONLY WAY.”** In declaring that, after his passing, only the Dharma should be one’s refuge (*dhamma.saraṇa*), the Buddha effectively and radically shifts the focus from the three refuges to **the One Refuge**—the Dharma—that is, one’s practice of the four focusses of mindfulness (*sati’paṭṭhāna*) that he often discourses on [§§2.12, 2.26]. In this sense, it becomes clear why in the Maha Sati’paṭṭhāna Sutta (D 22; M 10), for example, the Buddha declares it to be “the only way” (*ekāyana,magga*) “for the purification of beings.”<sup>32</sup>

It is important here to understand that the Buddha is referring to mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*). For mental cultivation to progress, we need to be strongly grounded in **moral virtue** or moral conduct (*sīla*), so that such a mental cultivation would lead to wisdom (*paññā*) and spiritual liberation (*vimutti*) (M 1: 195-197). As such, the “only way” here does not refer to a particular “method” of meditation, whether it is called “Vipassanā” or “Satipaṭṭhāna.”<sup>33</sup> The “only way” here refers to **the noble eightfold path**, which is clear from the Dhammapada (as pointed out to me by Brahmavaṃso):

*Maggān’atṭhaṅgiko seṭṭho  
saccānaṃ caturo padā  
virāgo seṭṭho dhammānaṃ  
dipadānañ ca cakkhumā.*

**The best of paths is the eightfold path.**

The best of truths are the four sayings [the Noble Truths].

Non-attachment is the best of states.

The best of the two-legged is the Seeing One.

*Eso’va maggo natth’añño  
dassanassa visuddhiyā  
etaṃhi tumhe paṭipajjatha  
Mārass’etaṃ pamohanaṃ*

**This indeed is the only way,**

**There is none other for the purity of vision:**

Follow then this path:

This is the bewilderment of Māra [the Evil One].

(Dh 273 f)

It does not refer to “Vipassanā” meditation (there is no such meditation in early Buddhism) or to one triumphalist school of meditation to the exclusion of others. This *ekāyana* statement should be understood in the context of the Buddha’s final instruction here—and the Buddha’s prophecies of what is popularly known as **the “Dharma-ending age.”**<sup>34</sup> After the Buddha’s passing, he is no more the practitioner’s refuge as it were (not in person, anyway). As for the Saṅgha, its gradual laicization and degradation increases as the number of those who transgress the Vinaya increases and the number of arhats and saints decrease.<sup>35</sup>

**(6c) THE ONE REFUGE.** The one refuge, the Dharma as one’s practice, is the “one and only way,” which we have noted is the noble eightfold path, which is a statement of the four focusses of mindfulness in terms of total practice: on the inter-personal and social level (virtue), the personal level (mind or concentration), and the spiritual level (wisdom and liberation).

The “three refuges” of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are here revised and reduced to the barest minimum: **oneself and the Dharma**. Matthew Dillon, in his remarkable comparative study of the last days of Socrates and the Buddha in “Dialogues with Death,” remarks: “However much support may be offered by teacher and community, it all comes down to you and the Truth” (2000:547) [13a]. The Buddha is dead, long live the Dharma! [§2.26]<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> G H Sasaki, *Linguistic Approach to Buddhist Thought*. Delhi: MLBD, 1986: 58-63.

<sup>32</sup> D 2:290 = 315 = M 1:55 = 63 = S 5:141 = 167 f. = 185 f. = Kvu 158 = Vism 3.

<sup>33</sup> See “The Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas” = SD 13.

<sup>34</sup> See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:6.21.

<sup>35</sup> See **Saddhamma Paṭirūpaka S** (S 16.13/2:223 f); see *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:6.22.

<sup>36</sup> Further, on the Dharma being above even the Buddha himself, see **Gārava S** (S 6.2/1:138-140) = SD 12.3.



## 7 Mortuary rites and holy places

**(7a) MORTUARY PREPARATIONS.** This section is mainly based on a useful study on “Buddhist relic veneration in India” by **Kevin Trainor** (1997:32-65 = ch 2). Trainor claims that the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta is the locus classicus for the traditional Theravāda account of the origins of **the cult of relic worship**,<sup>37</sup> which is closely related to the stūpa cult. All this is of course related to mortuary rites and ancestor worship. Ānanda asks the Buddha how his remains (*sarīre*) are to be treated [§5.10]:

“Bhante, how are we to treat the Tathāgata’s remains?”<sup>38</sup>

“Do not worry yourselves about the funeral rites [relic worship],<sup>39</sup> Ānanda. You should strive for the highest goal, devote yourselves to the highest goal, and dwell with your minds tirelessly, zealously devoted to the highest goal. There are wise kshatriyas, wise brahmin, wise houselords who are devoted to the Tathāgata: they will take care of the Tathāgata’s funeral.”

(D 16.5.10/2:141)

Here the Buddha answers in relation to Ānanda himself since he is only a streamwinner and not yet an arhat. The Buddha is exhorting Ānanda to focus on his own personal spiritual development. Understandably, in such a poignant moment, Ānanda characteristically thinks of all the pressing matters to be settled in the face of the Buddha’s impending parinirvana. Ānanda, then repeats the question in a slightly different way, with a greater sense of urgency [§5.11]:

“But, Bhante, what should we do with the Tathagata’s remains?”<sup>40</sup>

Pressed for an answer, the Buddha answers that the Tathagata’s remains should be treated like those of a wheel-turning king, that is to say, the body (*sarīraṃ*) should be wrapped alternately with new unbleached cotton cloth and with a layer of teased cotton<sup>41</sup> for the length of 500 yugas.<sup>42</sup> A *yuga* is the length of an Indian plough, that is, 9 spans (DPL 605 f). A span (*vidatthi*) is the distance between the ends of the thumb and the little finger extended (about 20 cm = 8 ins). As such, a yuga is about 1.8 m (5.9 ft), and 500 yugas would be 900 m (984 yd).

However, even this dimension seems disproportionate, albeit smaller than “500 times.” With so much cloth and cotton wool, the Buddha’s body would end up looking like a giant cloth ball! However, if the cloth is narrow bandage-like strips—a few fingers’ breadth wide—(like those used to wrap an Egyptian mummy) then, the dimensions would appear more manageable. Probably, this bandaging is part of a pre-cremation embalming process.<sup>43</sup>

The body should then be placed in an oil-vat of iron and covered with an iron lid. The pyre should comprise only of fragrant material, and the body then cremated. Then **a stupa** [cairn or burial mound] is built over the relics at the crossroads [“where four highways meet”].<sup>44</sup> And the faithful who offer a gar-

<sup>37</sup> See Trainor, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism*, esp 1997:49-65. See, however, §7d here, where I think otherwise.

<sup>38</sup> *Kathaṃ mayā bhante Tathāgatassa sarīre patipajjāma ti.*

<sup>39</sup> “Funeral rites,” *sarīra, pūja.*

<sup>40</sup> *Kathaṃ pana mayā bhante Tathāgatassa sarīre patipajjitabban ti?*

<sup>41</sup> *Rañño Ānanda cakkavattissa sarīraṃ ahatena vatthena veṭhenti. Ahatena vatthena veṭhetvā vihatena kappāsena veṭhenti* (D 16.5.11/2:141). “Teased cotton” here is probably what we might today call “cotton wool.”

<sup>42</sup> *Etena upāyena pañcahi yuga, satehi* (D 16.5.11/2:142). Apparently, all the better known English trs (Rhys Davids, Walshe, Vajirā & Story, and Ṭhanissaro) overlooked or mistranslated *yuga*.

<sup>43</sup> For a recent comment on this interesting aspect of “the Buddha’s funeral,” see JS Strong 2007.

<sup>44</sup> This ref to crossroads [“where four highroads meet”] (*cātum, mahā, pathe*) has at least two levels of meaning. The first meaning has been discussed by RA Gunatilaka in “Ancient Stūpa Architecture: The significance of cardinal points and the cātummahāpatha concept” (1975:34-48), where the allusion is to the universal hegemony of the *cakkavattī* or wheel-turning king. In the Dharma sense, the Buddha is a “wheel-turner” but the wheel is the *Dharma*, -*cakra* (*dhama, cakka*), the wheel of truth, and not the *ājñā, cakra* (*ānā, cakka*), the wheel of power. The second meaning is more common in the suttas. In **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89), for example, the rajah Pasenadī praises the Buddha regarding how the Sangha members are so well disciplined “with neither rod nor sword” (M 89.13/2:122). In **Aṅgulimāla S** (M 86), the rajah again makes the same praise in reference to how the Buddha has tamed the bloodthirsty bandit, Aṅgulimāla, “with neither rod [fear] nor sword [force]” (M 86.14a/2:102). This is an example of

land, scent, or perfume powder, or bow down there, or brighten their minds there, it will be for their profit and welfare for a long time to come. [§5.11]

The Buddha then tells Ānanda that the following four people are **worthy of a stupa**: the Buddha, a Pratyeka Buddha (a fully self-enlightened Buddha who does not establish a dispensation), a disciple of the Buddha, and a wheel-turning king. The reason for this is that such an act brings peace of mind, and dying with such a thought leads one to a happy rebirth [§5.12]. The point here is not that dying in the holy land would bring one a happy rebirth, but rather that dying with a calm joyful mind (*pasanna, citta*) brings one happy rebirth.<sup>45</sup>

**(7b) SUPREME WORSHIP.** Apparently, we see here the canonical warrant (by the Sutta redactors) for the practice of pilgrimage and relic-worship. The Dīgha Commentary, however, provides an insight into Ānanda's intention behind his request:

Here the Blessed One thought, “Ānanda is thinking, ‘We will not be able to see the mentally cultivated ones.’ Let me now tell him places for seeing mentally cultivated one, places where they can live and would not have to seek here and there for an opportunity of seeing mentally cultivated ones.’ Thinking thus, he says, ‘There are these four’,” and so on.<sup>46</sup> (DA 2:582)

This admonition concerns the benefits of “being in the presence of those who embody in their physical demeanor the Buddhist ideal of enlightenment” (Trainor 1997:50). As we have noted [§5.5n], this spiritual practice is an adaptation of the Vedic practice of *darśana* (P *dassana*, Eng *darshan*), and asserted in such sayings as “the seeing of recluses... this is a supreme blessing”<sup>47</sup> (Kh 5.9/3). The significance of this passage becomes evident in the light of opening episode of this chapter [§§5.1-2].

In the Mallas' sal grove, the Buddha lies down between the two sal trees where he will pass away that same day. The Sutta records that the twin sal trees, though it is out of season, burst into fruit and flower, showering their blossoms upon the Buddha. *Mandāra* flowers and sandalwood powder gently rain from the heavens, and divine music is heard, by way of offering to the Buddha (*tathāgatassa pūjāya*). [§§5.2-3a].

The Buddha then exhorts Ānanda that such offerings are not the highest form of honour or veneration. The highest form of respect—the “supreme worship”—any monk, nun, layman or laywoman can show the Buddha is to live practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.<sup>48</sup> [§5.3b]

The Dīgha Commentary on this passage explains that the Bodhisattva did not make the resolution at the feet of Dīpaṅkara Buddha to become a Buddha for the sake of garlands, scents, music and song. The Buddha rejects this kind of worship for the sake of the long life of the teaching (*sāsana*) and for the benefit of the assembly (the monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). If “**worship with material things**” (*āmisā, pūjā*)<sup>49</sup> were not rejected, then his followers would not cultivate moral virtue, mental concentration and insight, but instead would spend their lives worshipping (and thinking in terms of material things). Not even a thousand monasteries equal to the Mahāvihāra, or a thousand caityas (shrines) equal to the

the difference between the “wheel of power” (*āṇā, cakka*), ie the sphere of political power, and the “wheel of truth” (*dhamma, cakka*), the realm of the Dharma (VA 10 = KhA 1:95; MA 2:278; ThaA 3:48).

<sup>45</sup> On the Buddhist pilgrimage, see sub-section (7g) here.

<sup>46</sup> *Atha Bhagavā: Ānando “mano, bhāvanīyānaṃ dassanaṃ na labhissāmī ti cinteti, hand’ assa mano, bhāvanīyānaṃ dassanaṃ hānaṃ ācikkhāmi, yattha vasanto ito c’ to ca anāhiṇḍitvā va lacchati mano, bhāvanīye bhikkhū dassanāyā ti, cintetvā cattār’imāni ti ādim āha.*

<sup>47</sup> *Samaṇānañ ca dassanaṃ... etam maṅgalam uttamaṃ.* See KhA 150 f = KhA:Ñ 163 f.

<sup>48</sup> *Yo kho Ānanda bhiikkhu vā bhikkhunī vā upasakā vā upāsikā vā dhammānudhamm, paṭipanno viharati samīci, paṭipanno anudhamma, cārī, so Tathāgataṃ sakkaroṭi garukaroṭi māneti pūjeti paramāya pūjāya* (D 5.3/2:138).

<sup>49</sup> There are 2 kinds of worship (*pūjā*): worship (or honouring) with material things (*āmisā, pūjā*) and worship with practice (*paṭipatti, pūjā*) (D 2:138; A 1.93). Dīgha Comy replaces *paṭipatti, pūjā* with “worship with non-material things” (*nirāmisa, pūjā*) (DA 5:179): see next para.

Mahā, cetiya,<sup>50</sup> it notes, are sufficient to support the teaching. And concludes: “Now, for the Tathāgata, right practice is proper worship, and surely it has been laid down by him for supporting the teaching.”<sup>51</sup>

The Commentary gives a detailed explanation of the key words in connection with the “**worship with non-material things**” (*nirāmisa, pūjā*) thus:<sup>52</sup>

Here, “practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma” (*dhammānudhamma, paṭi-panno*) means practising the preliminary path (*pubba, bhāga, paṭipadā*), practicing the ninefold supramundane states.<sup>53</sup> This very path is called “proper” (*sāmīci*) due to its suitability; it is “proper practice,” as such it is called *sāmīci, paṭipanno*.

*Anudhamma, cārī* means one, filled with the Dharma, conducts oneself in that same preliminary path.

*Pubba, bhāga, paṭipadā* should be known as referring to moral virtue, the rules of right conduct [monastic rules], the observance of the ascetic practices<sup>54</sup>—that is, the right practice leading to entry into the lineage [ie streamwinning etc]. As such, a monk who persists in the six kinds of disrespect,<sup>55</sup> transgresses the monastic rules (*paññatti*), earns a living through wrong false means (*anesanā*)—he is not one who practises the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma. But for one who does not transgress any of the monastic rules promulgated in the Conqueror’s time, by the limits of good conduct set by the Conqueror, like using the Conqueror’s black thread (*jina, -kāḷa, sutta*)<sup>56</sup>—he is said to be one who practises the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.

Similarly for a nun, this is the case.

<sup>50</sup> *Mahā, vihāra, sadisañ hi vihāra, saḥassam mahā, cetiya, sadisañ ca cetiya, saḥassam pi sāsanaṃ dhāretuṃ na sakkonti*. **The Mahāvihāra** was the central monastery in Anurādhapura built by Devanampiya Tissa (247-207 BCE) that came to be identified with orthodox Theravāda tradition in Sri Lanka. When Anurādhapura was abandoned around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the history of Mahāvihāra came to an end. **The Mahācetiya** is presumably a reference to the Mahā Thūpa (Great Stupa) in Anurādhapura built by Duṭṭha, gāmaṇī after his victory over the Tamils and which is said to enshrine one-eighth of all Buddha’s relics.

<sup>51</sup> *Sammā, paṭipatti pana Tathāgatassa anucchavikā pūjā, sā hi tena paṭṭhitā c’eva sakkoti sāsanaṃ ca sandhāretuṃ* (DA 2:578).

<sup>52</sup> *Tattha dhammānudhamma, paṭipanno ‘ti nava, vidhassa lokuttara, dhammassa anudhammaṃ pubba, bhāga, -paṭipadaṃ paṭipanno. Sā y’eva pana paṭipadā anucchavikattā “sāmīci ti vuccati, taṃ sāmīciṃ paṭipanno ‘ti sāmīci, -paṭipanno. Tam eva pubba, bhāga, paṭipadā, saṅkhatam anudhammaṃ carati pūretī ti anudhamma, cārī.*

*Pubbabhāga, paṭipadā ‘ti ca silaṃ ācāra, paṇṇatti dhutaṅga, samādānaṃ yāva gotra, bhūto sammā, paṭipadā vedītabbā. Tasmā yo bhikkhu chasu agāvesu paṭiṭṭhāya paññattim atikkamati, anesāya jīvitam [Be jīvikam] kappeti, ayam na dhammānudhamma, paṭipadam [Se -paṭipanno]. Yo pana sabbaṃ attano paññatta, sikkhāpadam jina, velam jina, mariyadam jina, kāḷa, suttaṃ anumattam pi na vītikkamati, ayam dhammānudhamma, paṭipanno nāma.*

*Bhikkhuniyā pi es’eva nayo. Yo pana upāsako pañca, verāni dasa akusala, kamma, pathe samādāya vattati appeti [PTS omits appeti], ayam na dhammānudhamma, paṭipanno. Yo pana tīsu saraṇesu pañcasu sīlesu dasasu sīlesu paripūrakārī [Se paripūrīkārī] hoti, māsassa aṭṭha uposathe karoti, dānaṃ deti, gandha, pūjam mālā, pūjam karoti, mātaraṃ upaṭṭhāti, pitaraṃ upaṭṭhāti, dhammike samaṇa, brāhmaṇe upaṭṭhāti, ayam dhammānudhamma, paṭipanno nāma hoti. Upāsikāya pi es’eva nayo.*

*Paramāya pūjāyā ‘ti uttamāya pūjāya, ayam hi nirāmisa, pūjā nāma sakkoti mama sāsanaṃ sandhāretuṃ. Yāva hi imā catasso parisā maṃ imāya pūjāya pūjessanti, tāva mama sāsanaṃ majjhe nabhassa puñña, cando viya virocissatī ti dasseti.* (DA 2:578 f).

<sup>53</sup> “The ninefold supramundane states” (*nava, lokuttara, dhammā*) are the 4 paths (*magga*) of sainthood—streamwinning, once-return, non-return and arhathood—their respective fruits (*phala*), and nirvana (Dhs 193,245).

<sup>54</sup> On the 13 ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*), see **Bakkula S** (M 124) = SD 3.15 Intro (2).

<sup>55</sup> “Disrespect” (*agāra*). The 6 kinds of respect” (*gāra* or *gāravatā*) are respect for the Teacher (*satthu, gāravatā*), for the Dharma (*dhamma, gāravatā*), for the Sangha (*saṅgha, gāravatā*), for the training (*sikkhā, gāravatā*), for heedfulness (*appamāda, āravatā*), and for hospitality (*paṭisanthāra, gāravatā*) (A 3:330).

<sup>56</sup> “**The Conqueror’s black thread**” means that the Conqueror [the Buddha], taking the role of a great carpenter, using a black thread, shows the Dharma regarding that which should be renounced and that which should be grasped within the confines of the training-rules (*Jina, kāḷa, suttaṃ jina, mahā, vaḍḍhakinā ṭhapitam vajjetabba, gaḥetabba, -dhamma, sandassana, kāḷa, suttaṃ sikkhā, mariyadam*) (DAṬ 2:228).

As regards a layman who persists in the five evils (*pañca,verāni*) [the habitual breaking any of the 5 Precepts], following the ten unwholesome courses of conduct<sup>57</sup>—he is one who does not practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma. But for one who fulfills the three refuges, the five precepts, and the ten precepts; who keeps the *uposatha* [observance of the 8 or the 10 precepts] on eight days of the month;<sup>58</sup> who gives food-offerings; who makes offerings of incense and of garlands; who supports mother; who supports father; who supports Dharma-minded recluses and brahmins—he is said to be one who practises the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.

Similarly for a laywoman, this is the case.

“The supreme worship” (*paramā pūjā*) means the highest worship. He [the Buddha] declares, “This is called the worship with non-material things (*nirāmisa,pūjā*) because it is able to sustain my Teaching [Dispensation]. Indeed, insofar as these four companies [of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen] worship me with this kind of worship, my Teaching will shine forth like the full moon in the middle of the sky.” (DA 2:578 f)<sup>59</sup>

We see here in Buddhaghosa’s commentary, a hint of a growing distinction between lay and monastic practice despite the fact that the original passage is addressed to “whatever monk, nun, layman or laywoman” [§5.3b]. Buddhaghosa, however, here gives a broader definition of the practice of “the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.” However, this trend of external and physical offerings (*amisa,pūjā*) became a popular practice amongst the monks of post-Buddha India, such as building stupas and caves, donating towards their maintenance, and ceremonies for “merit transference.”<sup>60</sup>

The “supreme worship” that the Buddha speaks of in the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta should be examined and reflected alongside a similar statement on true spiritual practice, that is, **the Gāraṇa Sutta** (S 6.2). The Sutta, in fact, gives the rationale for the supreme worship: the Buddha places the Dharma above even himself.<sup>61</sup> For, it is the Dharma that makes the Buddha. By that same token, even with the Buddha’s passing, the Dharma is still available to us. But the effort must be made by us to touch the Dharma.

<sup>57</sup> “Ten unwholesome courses of conduct” (*akusala,kammapatha*). See (**Kusalākusala**) **Saṅcetanika S 1** (A 10.206/5:292-297) = SD 3.9.

<sup>58</sup> *Uposatha*. **The Indian year** is divided into 3 seasons of about 4 months each—the cold season (winter, *hemanta*; cool, *sisira*) (Nov-Feb), the hot season (spring or “heat,” *gimhāna*, comprising spring, *vasanta*, Mar-May & summer, *gimha*, May-Jul) and the rains (*vassāna*, Jul-Sep; autumn, *sārada*, Sep-Nov). Each Indian lunar month (*māsa*) begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the waning moon and ends on the full moon. As such, each moon (month) has two halves or fortnights (*pakkhā*): the dark fortnight (*kaṇha,pakkha*) and the bright fortnight (*sukkhā,pakkha*). The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> fortnights of each quarter-year (ie 4 moons = 8 fortnights) has 14 days, the other fortnights 15 days each. During the fortnight, the nights of the full moon and the new moon (either the 14 or 15<sup>th</sup>) and the night of the half-moon (the 8<sup>th</sup>) are regarded as especially auspicious: these are the *uposatha* (observance) days. On the full moon and new moon days, the monks recite the Pāṭimokkha (code of monastic rule) and the laity visit the monasteries to listen to the Dharma and to meditate. On the *uposatha* days of the fortnight—ie the 8<sup>th</sup> (*aṭṭhamī*), the 14<sup>th</sup> (*cātuddasī*) or 15<sup>th</sup> (*pañṇarāsī*) days, and sometimes incl the 5<sup>th</sup> day (*pañcamī*)—the laity observe the 8 *uposatha* precepts (V 1:87, 102; M 1:39, 2:74; A 4:248; Sn 401; Vv 37.11; Thī 31; J 4:1, 5:173, 194, 6:232; Cp 1:10:4; Vism 227 f). On *pañcamī,aṭṭhamī,cātuddasī,pañṇarasīnaṃ uposatha,divasā*, see Ujl 192,28. The *pāṭihāriya,pakkha* (“extraordinary half”) is an ancient extra holy day now not observed (AA 2:234; SnA 378; Ujl 2:55; Thī:N 67 f n31). The “eight days” of observance mentioned here probably includes the “extra holy day,” observed during the commentarial times, ie 4 days of observance for each of the 2 fortnights of the moon. In **Upakkilesa S** (M 128), Anuruddha says that Nandiya and Kimbila would go to his residence “every fifth day (of the week) (*pañcāhikamī*)” to discuss the Dharma for the whole night (M 128.14/3:157; MA 2:242; KhA 147). In this way, they keep an extra *uposatha*, besides full moon and new moon days. This would total 6 observances a month. Apparently, the monthly 8 observances are a commentarial innovation. For more details on *uposatha*, see Sn:P (unpublished) endnote to Hemavata S (Sn 153/9:9:1a). Cf Indian calendar (9d)n here below.

<sup>59</sup> See Trainor 1997:52-54 for his comments.

<sup>60</sup> See eg G Schopen 1985. On monastic funerals, see Schopen 1992.

<sup>61</sup> S 6.2/1:138-140 = SD 12.3.



**(7c) STUPAS AND CAITYAS.**<sup>62</sup> The words “caitya” (P *cetiya*) and “stupa” (P *thūpa*) are sometimes misunderstood.<sup>63</sup> From the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, it is evident that **caityas** originally referred to open-air nature or tree shrines (Dh 118), common in pre-Buddhist India [§§3.1 f, 3.46].<sup>64</sup> One of the Buddha’s opening teachings in the sutta is this:

Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs honour, respect, esteem and venerate the Vajjī shrines, both those within the city and outside it, and do not neglect the due offerings as given and made to them formerly, their growth is to be expected, not their decline. (D 1.4/2:75)

Such shrines were popular with the Buddha and his monks as dwellings and meditation spots. Such tree shrines were often the “abodes of yakshas” (*yakkha-ṭ,thānāni*, DA 520), that is, either they were actually haunts of yakshas (who were either tutelary spirits or ogres) or shrines dedicated to them (eg Gotamaka shrine, DA 373). Such shrines were also popular with other recluses (*samaṇā*) probably because they attracted local residents and devotees who brought alms to them.<sup>65</sup>

Bareau, quoting from the Mahāsaṅghika Vinaya (T 1425:498b), has shown that this early sectarian school, the Mahāsaṅghika, clearly distinguished between *stūpa* and *caitya* (1962:240). He thinks that the *caityas* were memorials without relics marking locations for the purpose of recalling important event in the Buddha’s life, while *stūpas* contained the actual remains of the Buddha. Bareau associates *caityas* with the four sacred sites in the Buddha’s life. **The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) and **Samvega Sutta** (A 4.118)<sup>66</sup> list the 4 places that arouse samvega [a sense of urgency] (*samvejanīya-ṭ,thānā*)<sup>67</sup> as follows:

- (1) the place of the Nativity (Lumbini Park, modern Rummidei);
- (2) the place of the Great Awakening (Uruvelā on the Nerañjarā river, modern Ureli on the Lilanja river);
- (3) the place of the First Discourse (the Deer Park at Isipatana, modern Sahet-Mahet); and
- (4) the place of the Mahā Parinirvana (Kusināra, modern Kashgar).

(D 16.5.8/2:140; A 4.118/2:120 f)<sup>68</sup>

Bareau argues that these outward form of the respective monuments was so similar that the two—stupa and caitya—were confounded with one another and the distinction no longer maintained (1974a: 275-299). Kevin Trainor, in his *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism*, remarks that

This distinction may find corroboration in the Pali [Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta], where the term *cetiya* is used to refer to the four sites worthy of pilgrimage, while the term *thūpa* appears to be reserved for a monument enshrining corporeal remains [D 2:141 f]. Additional support for a distinction between the two terms emerges from a study of the cult centered around Mahāyāna Buddhist texts.<sup>69</sup> (Kevin Trainor 1997:35; amplifications from Trainor’s fnn; emphasis added)

<sup>62</sup> This section is mainly sourced from Trainor, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism*, 1997:34-35 (forming part of ch 2). This ch is an excellent reading in this connection.

<sup>63</sup> See Ency Bsm: Cetiya (Jotiya Dhirasekera).

<sup>64</sup> D 16.3.1 f/2:102, 16.3.46/2:117 f; also Sārandada Cetiya (D 2:75); Ānanda Cetiya (D 2:123, 126). See DA 373. BC Law, “Cetiya in Buddhist Literature” in *Studia Indi-Iranica: Ehrengabe für Wilhelm Geiger*, ed Walter Wüst, Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1931:42-48. The cult of yaksha-veneration is discussed in Odette Viennot, *Le Culte de l’arbre dans l’Inde ancienne*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954: esp 113-120. (Refs fr Trainor 1997: 34 n12.)

<sup>65</sup> AL Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, NY: Grove Press, 1959:262.

<sup>66</sup> A 4.118/2:120 f.

<sup>67</sup> On “sense of urgency” (*samvega*), see sub-section (7f) here. For a discussion on Buddhist pilgrimage, see sub-section (7g) here. On 8 such occasion or places (*aṭṭha samvega, vatthu*), see KhpA 235.

<sup>68</sup> Bareau discusses the close connection between **sacred trees and caityas**, noting that the 4 holy places were all identified with sacred trees (1974b:16-17).

<sup>69</sup> Trainor’s fn: “Gregory Schopen, ‘The Phrase,’ [1975:]151-152. Note, however, Schopen’s more recent observation calling attention to an apparent preference for the item *cetiya* in both Andhran epigraphy and in some canonical Pali literature, a characteristic that he suggests may be evidence for mutual contact and influence; see ‘An Old Inscription,’ [1991:]322 n38; cf Schopen, ‘The Stūpa Cult,’ [1989:]91.

I shall discuss in the next sub-section [7d] that Trainor errs in claiming that “the term *thūpa* appears to be reserved for a monument enshrining corporeal remains [D 2:141 f].”

Trainor, however, gives a helpful etymological and historical discussion on the caitya and stupa. He discusses a few possible etymologies of *stūpa* (P *thūpa*), the most important of which is √*stūp*, “to heap up, pile, erect” (found in Pāṇini’s *Dhātu, pāṭha*). Most commentators derive the word *caitya* (P *cetiya*) from *citā*, “a funeral pile” [or pyre], which comes from √*ci*, “to pile up, arrange.” *Cetiya*, the Pāli form of the Sanskrit *caitya*, occurs in the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit in the sense of an “object or person worthy of veneration” (BHSD 233).

In the Vedic tradition of the Buddha’s time, the caitya appears to refer to some kind of shrine at which a *balī* or offering would be made.<sup>70</sup> Dikshitar also notes that the law books of Manu and Yajñā-, valkya use the term *caitya, vrkṣa* to refer to trees in the burial ground marking the boundary limits of the village, a fact that he connects with the ancient Indian practice of propitiating powerful spirits thought to reside in trees (1938:446-448). The Dhammapada is instructive here:

Many humans, threatened by fear, seek refuge  
In hills [rocks] and in forests, and in **grove shrines and tree shrines**. (Dh 118)<sup>71</sup>

The caitya, as such, Trainor concludes, covers a range of meanings

from associations with the place of the Vedic fire sacrifice, to the place of cremation and burial, to sacred groves and trees associated with power spirits. What is striking, however, is the fundamental tension between the Vedic fire altar as a sacred place associated with ritual purity and the site of cremation and burial with its associated threat of impurity. How these seemingly contradictory ideas became joined in the Buddha understanding of the *caitya* demands further consideration. (Trainor 1997:37 f)

**Paul Mus** has done a complete analysis of the brahmanic sacrificial cult in terms of its significance for the practice of relic veneration in the introduction to his 2-volume study of Borobudur, *Barabudur: esquisse d’une histoire du Bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes* (Hanoi, 1935). His broad and complex ideas are difficult to summarize, but an important point relevant here is that he sees the continuity between the brahmanic sacrifice centred around the *agni, cayana*—the ritual of “piling up” (*cayana*) of bricks to form the fire altar—and the cultic veneration of the Buddha centering around the stupa and its relics,

Mus argues that the stupa serves as an object of mediation—he uses the neologism “mesocosm” (“middle world”)—between the human and nirvana. The stupa represents the body of the Buddha who has passed into parinirvana, a body brought back to life by his corporeal remains and present (or, *ad sanctos*, a term used by Schopen).<sup>72</sup> Mus thinks that the cult of relic veneration centres around the notion that the Buddha’s continued presence in the world<sup>73</sup>—something denied in the early teachings—and that this notion and its attending practices are derived from magical beliefs widely prevalent in Asia. In this case, they are closely analogous to the ritual of brahmanic sacrifice centred around the *agni, cayana*.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> VRR Dikshitar, “Origin and Early History of Caityas.” *Indian Historical Quarterly* 14, 1938:444 f. The term *balī* is found in the Pali Canon, see **Ādiya S** (A 3:45 f) where the fivefold offerings (*pañca, balī*) are mentioned (A 5.41/3:45 f). See SD 2.1 (2003).

<sup>71</sup> *Bahuṃ ve saraṇaṃ yanti | pabbatāni vanāni ca | ārāma, rukkha, cetiyāni | manussā bhaya, tajjitā*. See Dikshitar 1938:467 n15 & Dh:CP 248.

<sup>72</sup> “Burial *ad sanctos* and the physical presence of the Buddha in early Indian Buddhism,” 1987.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion on this notion, see this Intro §9f below.

<sup>74</sup> Trainor discusses Mus’ approach in 1997:38-39 & 96-135 (ch 4).



**(7d) RELIC AND STUPA WORSHIP**

**7d.1 *Sarīra* and *sarīra, pūjā*.** André Bareau, in his “La *Parinirvāṇa* du Bouddha et la naissance de la religion bouddhique,”<sup>75</sup> traces the practice of the veneration of Buddha relics back to the first decades following the Final Parinirvana. He bases his arguments mainly on this passage [§5.10]:

“Bhante, how are we to treat the Tathāgata’s **bodily remains** [*sarīre*]?”

“Do not worry yourselves about **the *sarīra, pūjā***,<sup>76</sup> Ānanda. Come now, Ānanda, you should strive for your own good, devote yourselves to your own good, and dwell with your minds tirelessly, zealously devoted to your own good. There are wise kshatriyas, wise brahmins, wise householders who are devoted to the Tathāgata: they will take care of the Tathagata’s funeral rites.

(D 16.5.10/2:141)

Following Bareau, most western scholars have interpreted *sarīra, pūjā* as “relic worship.”<sup>77</sup> Based on this view, the passage apparently prohibits monastics from “relic worship.” Bareau concludes his paper by saying that the monks at first had nothing to do with the practice and were only gradually induced into it under the influence of the laity (1974a:299).<sup>78</sup>

However, if we examine the Pāli of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, we will notice that the word *sarīra* is used in a few different ways. The word *sarīra* (Skt *śarīra*) has two broad meanings: (1) the body (living or dead); (2) bodily remains (both bones or relics). The *Pali-English Dictionary* gives all these senses:

(1) **The (physical) body** (D 1:157; M 1:157; S 4:286; A 1:50, 2:41, 3:57 f, 323 f, 4:190; Sn 478, 584; Dh 151; Nm 181; J 1:394 (six blemishes), 2:31, 3:53 (~*maṃsa*, flesh of the body) ; *antima, sarīra*, one who wears his last body, an Anāgāmin (Sn 624; S 1:210; Dh 400).

(2) **A dead body, a corpse** (D 2:141, 164, 295 f; M 1:58, 3:91).

(3) **The bones** (D 2:164, 296; M 1:58 f)

(4) **Relics** (Vv 63, 32; VvA 269). In later works, the suffix *-dhātu* is added, ie *sarīrika, dhātu*, to denote “relics (of the Buddha)” (VvA 165, 269; Mahv 13, 167).

The Thai language has traditionally distinguishes between “sa.rīi.ra.kaai” (*sarīra, kāya*), the physical body, and “sa.rīi.ra.thaat” (*sarīra, dhātu*) or “sa.rīi.ri.ka.thaat” (*sarīrika, dhātu*), the relics, but *sa.rīi.ra* itself refers to “the body,” never to “relics.” However, in Pali, as is evident from the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta narrative, the word *sarīra*, depending on text (grammar) and context, shifts in meaning between “body” and “relics.”

In the accusative plural, *sarīre*, can refer either to the bodily remains [§5.10 f], and obliquely to “body” as in rituals concerning the body or “funeral rites” (*sarīra, pūjā*) [§5.10], or to “relics,” as in “Then a stupa should be built over the relics...” [§5.11b]. The accusative singular (*sarīram*), however, refers to the body (both living and dead), but at §5.11b it specifically means “dead body” or “remains.”<sup>79</sup>

It should be noted firstly that the word *dhātu* (meaning “relic”) does not appear in the Mahā Parinibbāna or anywhere else in the Pali Canon. Secondly, the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta states in the briefest way, apparently by way of afterthought, how the Buddha’s relics (*sarīra*) are distributed amongst the kshatriyas and the erection of stupas over them. Even the Dīgha Commentary admits that the story of the relics and the construction of the ten stupas were added by *saṅgīti, kārā* (council fathers) simply to indicate that

<sup>75</sup> Bulletin de l’Ecole Française de l’Extrême-Orient 61 1974a:275-299.

<sup>76</sup> Lit “body worship,” but I have left this term untranslated here in keeping with the discussion involved here.

<sup>77</sup> See Trainor 1997:55 n98 where he qu examples: TO Ling 1973:167-167; A Hirakawa (who developed a complex argument linking the practice of stupa veneration and relic cult with the rise of Mahāyāna) 1963:37-106; Ency of Rel (1987) 14:92-96. Schopen however has persuasively argued, from an analysis of some early Mahāyāna texts, against Hirakawa. Schopen concludes that the institutional rise of Mahāyāna was closely linked with the cult of the book (“The Phrase,” 1975:180 f).

<sup>78</sup> For a summary of Bareau’s view, see Trainor 1997:53 f.

<sup>79</sup> K R Norman, in his “Notes on the Ahaurā version of Aśoka’s First Minor Rock Edict” (1983), qu Böhtlingk & Roth, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, sv *śarīra*, is aware that “in Sanskrit *śarīra* in the singular means ‘body,’ not ‘relics,’ which is its meaning in the plural” (1983:278 = 1991:252). However, as clear from above [§5.11], it should also be noted that *sarīre* (acc pl) can tr either as “relics,” or as “bodily remains (or body),” depending on the context. See also Schopen, “Monks and the relic cult,” 1991c:191 f, for which summary, see Trainor 1997:55 f.

this occurred in India (DA 2:611, 615). The “council fathers” (*saṅgīti,kārā*) here refer to the council fathers or elder monks in Sri Lanka, such as those responsible for the writing down of the Pali Canon at the Alu,vihāra in Matulā Janapada (ie the Āloka Vihāra near Matale, about 23 km (14 mi) north of Kandy, in the Central Province).<sup>80</sup>

Some stanzas of the relic account at the end of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta [§§6.27-28]<sup>81</sup> is also found in **the Buddha,vaṃsa**, which has a whole chapter of 13 stanzas<sup>82</sup> on the relic distribution. The Buddha,-vaṃsa goes on to relate in some detail how the relics and other requisites of the Buddha are distributed.

**Oliver Abeynayake** makesthis observation:

If the story of relics was added to the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* during the time of the Third Council as the Commentary clearly points out, the Buddhavaṃsa story was added to it very much later. What is said in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* regarding the stanzas found at the end of the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* can be easily applied to the stanzas of the last chapter of the *Buddhavaṃsa*. This chapter was obviously a fabrication of Sri Lankan monks who lived after the time of the Commentary, *MadhurattHAVILASINĪ* [Buddha.vaṃsa Comy]. This explains why these stanzas are not commented on in the *MadhurattHAVILASINĪ*. The story of relics was the most popular subject amongst the Buddhists as a later stage. This was enlarged and embellished by adding new information according to the wishes of the learned monks and according to the needs of the various countries. In Burma, the last chapter of the *Buddhavaṃsa* was extended by adding some more stanzas! They are not found in the Sri Lankan manuscripts. (Abneyayake 1984:194)<sup>83</sup>

**7d.2 Scholars on relics and stupas.** Gregory Schopen argues that the *sarīra,pūja* instruction [§5.10] applies only to Ānanda, not to all monastics, and that *sarīra,pūja* in this passage does not refer to “cult activity directed towards relics or reliquaries,” but to “funeral ceremonies” that took place between the time of death, and the cremation and the stupa-construction (1991:189=1997:101). Schopen states, but without total certainty, that the Sanskrit version of MPS (49.16)—which states that Mahā Kāśyapa was a monk of the highest standing, one of only four *mahā sthavirā* alive at that time, and in monastic terms, one “rich and famous”<sup>84</sup>—“may be suggesting that participation in that part of monastic funerals known as *sarīra-pūjā* was—in, at least, important funerals—the prerogative of advanced monks of high status” (1991:195=1997:107 f). Ānanda, at that time, still a learner (namely, a streamwinner).

An Yang-Gyu, on the other hand, rebuts Schopen by arguing that the laity—such as kshatriyas, brahmins and houselords—are expected to take an active part on the funeral arrangements [§5.10]. Furthermore, other versions of the Mahā,parinirvāṇa Sūtra agree with the Pali version in excluding all monks from such tasks (2002a: 161). One Chinese version even says that Ānanda arranges for nuns and laywomen to worship the Buddha’s body first because he thinks they were weak, and adds that everyone, monastic and lay, worships the Buddha’s body before his cremation (T 1 206c27). As such, it is clear that the funeral rites (whether it means preparing the body or worshipping the body) is not a “prerogative of advanced, high status monks” as Schopen claims. An Yang-Gyu convincingly explains the real situation:

<sup>80</sup> On the writing down of the Pali Canon in Sri Lanka, see EW Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 1946:79.

<sup>81</sup> D 16.6.27-28/2:164-167; see also D:RD 2:190 n1; Jtkm 37; *Epochs of the Conqueror* (Jina,kāla,mālī tr Jayawickrama) [Jinak] 1968:53. See B:H 98 n1 for other refs.

<sup>82</sup> B ch 28, which is not commented on in BA (Madhur’attha,vilāsinī), showing that the chapter was a later addition. IB Horner makes no note of this fact in her B:H (tr of Buddha,vaṃsa) and BA:H (tr of Buddha,vaṃsa Comy).

<sup>83</sup> On “reverence to relics,” see Oliver Abeynayake 1984:192-196.

<sup>84</sup> Ironically, in the Pali texts, Mahā Kassapa is represented as “a man of the four quarters,” ie one who is contented wherever he is, and is a model of as disciplined and austere wandering forest meditator. The Buddha declared him to be the foremost of those monks who observed the austere rules (*dhūtaṅga,dhara*, A 1:23; S 2:155). One of his Thera,gāthā says: “Taking whatever scraps one finds as food, fermented urine as medicine, | The foot of a tree as lodging, a dust-heap rag as robe— | For whom these suffice, truly he is a man of the four quarters” (Tha 1057). He is also a spiritual patron of the unfortunate and poor (U 30 f). See Ray 1994:146 n52 & Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, Singapore, 2004, ch 6 “The Buddha’s image and shadow.”

Kassapa's *sarira-pūjā*, I think, is an attempt to justify Kassapa's succeeding the Buddha. According Sk[t] (428 49.14), Ti[b] (Rockhill 144) and M[ūlasarvāstivāda] (T 401b15), when Kassapa arrives at the place of cremation at Kusinārā, he opens the iron coffin, removes the corpse of the Buddha from its wrappings, and pays his respects to the Buddha. Then he wraps the corpse in cloth afresh. This account is peculiar, for we do not immediately see why Kassapa makes such efforts to unravel and then re-wrap the corpse.

This process may be understood best when we compare it with what happened after the death of King Daśaratha in the Rāmāyana. The corpse of the king was kept in a vat of oil [oil-vat?] for seven days until his heir, Bharata, came. When Bharata arrived, he performed the obsequies for his father. Waldschmidt interprets that Kassapa performed an analogous procedure for the corpse of the Buddha (Waldschmidt 1944-48:344 f). As Bharata, the heir, conducts the funeral ceremony, so Kassapa, as an heir of the Buddha, is made to play the same role in succeeding the Buddha.

All these three versions belong to one and the same school, namely, the Mūlasarvāstivādin... which most explicitly states that Kassapa is the successor to the Buddha... (Ray 1994:108).<sup>85</sup>  
(An Yang-Gyu 2002a:162)

Schopen's purpose in arguing that the *sarira, pūja* instruction [§5.10] applies only to Ānanda, not to all monastics, and that it refers to "funeral ceremonies" is aimed at interpreting this instruction as allowing monks to participate in stupa worship, a pattern he sees in his archaeological fieldwork of monastic, stupa and ethnographic remains.<sup>86</sup>

However, the MPS makes no mention whatsoever of monks worshipping relics. Only the laity is mentioned as doing all the funerary preparations. The Mallas of Kusinārā conduct the funerary rites for six days [§6.13]. On the seventh day, Ānanda merely repeats to them what the Buddha has instructed him [§6.17]. The ensuing dispute over Buddha's relics arose between the Mallas and seven other parties. It is striking that not a single monk is involved in the relics dispute, which is revolved by a brahmin [§§6.24-26]. The relic recipients each built a stupa in their own countries and held festivities to celebrate the occasion. The monks, on the other hand, went on to gather for the first Buddhist council at Rājagaha to recite the Dharma and Vinaya.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, while it is true that nowhere in the MPS is it said that monastics are prohibited from worshipping stupas, "it is nevertheless true that the text does not portray stūpa worship as standing at the centre of their religious life" (Ray 1994:359). The Fourth Book of **the Milinda, pañha** clearly states that renunciants are not to be involved in stupa worship:

This is not the work of the Conqueror's sons [the monks], that is to say, worship. Rather this is what the Conqueror's sons should do, that is to say, the utter comprehension of karma-formations, wholesome attention, the contemplation of the four focusses of mindfulness, grasping the essence of mental objects of meditation, battling against the defilements, devotion to the spiritual goal. It is by the rest, gods and humans, that worship is to be done. Therefore, maharajah, The Tathāgata thinking, "Do not engage yourself in what does not concern you [what is not your work]; engage in these tasks," says, "Do not worry yourselves about the funeral rites, Ānanda."<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> According to Przyłuski, the tradition of placing Kassapa at the head of the order is late one (1926-28:303). The early tradition regards **Aññata Koṇḍañña** as the seniormost of the order members (*rattaññū*, A 1:23) (see Ray 1994:118). Since the Buddha refuses to appoint a successor, the later monastics attempt to appoint an heir after his passing. See An Yang-Gyu 2002a:162 n5.

<sup>86</sup> See eg his article, "Two problems in the history of Indian Buddhism: The layman/monk distinction and the doctrines of the transference of merit," 1985:9-47 = 1997:23-55. Unfortunately, he is trying to impose the findings of his fieldwork on post-Buddha situations upon the scriptural tradition of early Buddhism. Although his analyses may reflect certain monastic and lay lifestyles amongst the post-Buddha Indian Buddhists, there are no remains or artifacts from the Buddha's times extant today that support his notion of the prevalence of relic and stupa worship amongst the monastics of those times. In this case, Schopen's assertion, interesting as they are, would be like doing a study of the campus and students of the University of California at Berkeley and claiming that they are also those of Oxford University in England.

<sup>87</sup> See T 402c5 (Mūlasarvāstivāda), T 207c10, T 190c19, all of which go on to describe the council.

<sup>88</sup> D 16.5.10.

If the Tathāgata had not spoken thus, maharajah, the monks would have been obsessed with his robe and bowl,<sup>89</sup> and would have worshipped the Buddha himself.<sup>90</sup> (Miln 177-179)

Schopen<sup>91</sup> discusses this passage at length and charges that “the *Milindapañha* here evidently represents a revisionist tendency within Pāli commentarial tradition and reflects the growing view that worship of the stūpa is not something in which the ideal monastic should engage” (Ray 1994:351). Schopen, in his “The stūpa cult and the extant Pali Vinaya,”<sup>92</sup> presents what he regards as evidence showing that the absence of references to stupa worship in the Vinaya may be a later development “the fact that they are no longer found in the *Vinaya* known to us could, apparently, only be explained by assuming that either they had inadvertently dropped out of the manuscripts or, perhaps, were intentionally written out” (1989:93). At the end of his paper, Schopen says:

If the interpretation presented here is correct, and if the Pāli *Vinaya*, like all the *vinayas*, has such rules, and they were removed at a comparatively recent date. If this interpretation is not correct, and if the Pāli *Vinaya* did not contain such rules, then it either could not have been the *Vinaya* which governed early Buddhist monastic communities in India, or it presents a very incomplete picture of early and actual monastic behaviour and has, therefore, little historical value as a witness for what we know actually occurred on a large scale at all of the earlier monastic sites in India that we have some knowledge of. The whole question clearly deserves further consideration. (Schopen 1989:100 = 1997:94)

This paper is perhaps Schopen’s most speculative, even desperately wishful, as most of his arguments are tenuous (like quoting the Mahā Parākrāmabāhu Kaṭikāvata outside of its ancient Lankan context). Understandably, his paper met with a massive rebuttal from various well known scholars all expressing doubts, especially on the specific point that rules regarding stupas were consciously and systematically removed from the extant Pali Vinaya.<sup>93</sup> Gombrich, for example, colourfully and rightly charges Schopen for “Making mountains without molehills” (1991)!

**7d.3 Stupa.** Trainor errs in claiming that “the term *thūpa* appears to be reserved for a monument enshrining corporeal remains [D 2:141 f].”<sup>94</sup> There is no evidence from the Nikāyas—certainly not in the Mahā Parinibbana Sutta—that all **stupas** contain relics. As clearly evident from **the section on the four holy places** [§5.8]—referred to as D 2:141 f by Trainor—the stupas at the first three places commemorate living acts of the Buddha (his birth, awakening and teaching of the First Discourse); only the last stupa perhaps would qualify as a **caitya** (a shrine with relics), technically speaking. In other words, while some stupas are reliquary cairns, others are commemorative shrines (*uddesika cetiya*).

The Buddha’s statement here with regards to the erecting of a stupa “for the Tathāgata” or “of the Tathāgata” (*Tathāgatassa thūpo*) is instructive:

Ānanda, just as one treats the remains of a wheel-turning king, even so, one should treat the remains of the Tathāgata. Then a stupa [cairn or burial mound] should be built for the Tathāgata at the crossroads [where four highways meet].<sup>95</sup> (D 16.5.11c/2:142)

<sup>89</sup> The worship of the Buddha’s bowl did in fact develop and Faxian (c 400 CE) records as having seen it at Peshawar (Northwest Frontier Province, Pakistan) (see Miln:RD 1:248 n1).

<sup>90</sup> *Mahārāja, akammaṃ h’etaṃ jīna, puttānaṃ yadidaṃ pūjā, sammasanaṃ sankhārānaṃ, yoniso manasikāro, satipaṭṭhānānupassanā, ārammaṇa, sāra-g, gāho, kilesa, yuddhaṃ, sadattham anuyūñjanā, etaṃ jīna, puttānaṃ karaṇīyaṃ, avasesānaṃ devamanussānaṃ pūjā karaṇīyā, tasmā, mahā, rāja, tathāgato “mā ime akamme yuñjantu, kamme ime yuñjantū” ti āha “abyāvaṭā tumhe, Ānanda, hotha tathāgatassa sarīra, pūjāyā” ti. Yad’etaṃ, mahā, rāja, tathāgato na bhaṇeyya, patta, cīvaram pi attano pariyādāpetvā bhikkhū Buddha, pūjāṃ y’eva kareyyun” ti.*

<sup>91</sup> 1991b:195 f = 1997:108.

<sup>92</sup> 1989:83-100 = 1997:86-98.

<sup>93</sup> See eg Gombrich 1991, Hallisey 1991, and Hinüber 1991. For an interesting discussion on who were those involved in stupa worship in ancient India, see Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India*, 1994:339-352.

<sup>94</sup> See prev sub-section 7c.

<sup>95</sup> *Cātum, mahā, pathe Tathāgatassa thūpaṃ karonti.*



It is interesting to note here that neither *sarīram* nor *sarīre* is mentioned: “Then a stupa [cairn or burial mound] should be built for the Tathāgata (*Tathāgatassa*) at the crossroads [where four highways meet].” Similarly in the preceding paragraph [§5.11b] in reference to the wheel-turning king, neither *sarīram* nor *sarīre* is mentioned: “Then a stupa [cairn or burial mound] should be built for the wheel-turning king (*rañño cakkavattissa*) at the crossroads [where four highways meet].” This silence may suggest that the Buddha is not particularly concerned that the relics should be interred in the stupa. However, this is perhaps an argument from silence.

Moreover, the notion of enshrinement of relics is after the fact: there is no sanction anywhere in the Nikāyas by the Buddha, allowing for such a practice. At best we can say that relic worship and stupa cults are a post-Buddha practice popular amongst the Buddhists. As we have noticed earlier, the Buddha only says that “a stupa [cairn or burial mound] should be built for the Tathāgata at the crossroads [where four highroads meet].”<sup>96</sup> Except for mention of the claimants of the Buddha’s relics proposing to build stupas over relics, such as the “relic distribution” episode at the end of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta [§§6.24-28], **there is clearly no endorsement of relic worship at all in the early Pali Canon.**<sup>97</sup>

While some stupas may contain relics of the Buddha, of the saints, or of revered individuals, this is not the rule. If relics are such valuable artifacts, it would clearly be unsafe to deposit them in open-air structures like a stupa.<sup>98</sup> In fact, well known relics such as the “tooth relic,” the Sinhalese palladium, are enshrined safely within the walls of the relic chamber (“dagoba” from *dhātu, garbha*) or relic house (*dhātu, ghara*).<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, as Bareau has shown, the Theravāda Vinaya is conspicuous in its lack of rules regarding the stupa cult. Both Bareau (“La Construction,” 1962:229) and Roth (“Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa,” 1980:185 f) argue that the absence of any rules concerning stupa worship in the Theravāda Vinaya reflects monastic opposition to the practice within that school. However, as Trainor notes, “While this absence is striking, it hardly provides a sufficient basis for concluding that members of the Theravāda saṅgha did not participate in relic veneration” (1997:56). In fact, Trainor discusses compelling evidence that relic worship was well established in Sri Lanka by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE<sup>100</sup>—and the Vinaya rules concerning stupa worship were added to non-Theravāda schools (such as the Mūlasarvāstivāda) no earlier than that period.<sup>101</sup>

**7d.4 Worship and the laity.** The point remains that no one has conclusively shown that the Buddha, *as a rule*, allows relic worship or stupa worship. Not only is there no mention in the Nikāyas of relics being interred in stupas, even this statement of the Buddha, only shows that he *tolerates* external expression of devotion at such places, mainly because they were already in vogue in his time.

And they who offer a garland, scent, or perfume powder, or bow down there [at the stupa for a wheel-turning king or for a Buddha], or brighten their minds with faith<sup>102</sup> there, it will be for their profit and welfare for a long time to come  
(D 5.11bc/2:142)

It is, of course, possible that this passage was interpolated at a later time. What the later monastics and laity practised by way of the stupa cult and relic worship do not discount what the Buddha himself clearly teaches, that is, one should know the difference between his teaching and his tolerance.

Bareau’s notion that the monks at first had nothing to do with the external worship, which were only gradually induced into it under the influence of the laity (1974a:299), is clearly still correct. **Schopen’s**

<sup>96</sup> D 16.5.11c/2:142.

<sup>97</sup> For a different opinion, see Schopen 1991c & Trainor 1997:45-54.

<sup>98</sup> On relic theft, see K Trainor, “When Is a Theft Not a Theft? Relic Theft and the Cult of the Buddha’s Relics in Sri Lanka.” *Numen* 39,1 (1992):1-26.

<sup>99</sup> SnA mentions such a structure: *Manussa tassa bhagavato ekam y’eva dhātu, gharam katvā cetiyam patiṭṭhāpesum yojanam ubbedham ca parikkhepena ca* ([After the parinirvana of Kassapa Buddha,] the people built a relic house, a yojana high and in circumference, and installed a shrine for Blessed One” (SnA 1:194).

<sup>100</sup> See Trainor 1997: ch 3.

<sup>101</sup> On relic worship in India (after the Buddha), see Trainor 1997:57-65. On the accommodation of stupas into monasteries, see An Yang-Gyu 2002a:165-170.

<sup>102</sup> On faith, §5.8c n in this Sutta.

ideas<sup>103</sup> only prove **Bareau** correct in showing that *after* the Buddha, stupa and relic cults were popular with Indian Buddhists. The Theravāda reservation about the stupa cult and relic worship apparently has been maintained from the Buddha's time until today. The deeply entrenched tensions between the monastic and the lay, between the stupa and the monastery, have been observed by various modern scholars.

**A W Sadler**<sup>104</sup> has explored these tensions in the Burmese situation, and observes that “so clearly significant [a] dichotomy between two lifestyles (lay and monastic) and the two religious goals (*dathana* and [monastic] discipline)” (1970:284). On the one hand, there is the Buddhism of the laity, bound up with *darshan* (seeing) and the stupa; and, on the other, the Buddhism of the monastic sangha, based on the Vinaya. Then there is the territorial separation of stupa and monastery. The Kyaik Ka Loke pagoda and monastery is typical: the pagoda complex stands on high ground, whereas the monastic complex is built on lower ground (id).<sup>105</sup>

Despite this apparent tension and separation between stupa and monastery, there are no hard and fast rules that prevent any monastic from stupa worship or dedication of merit to relatives. Such show of piety is more commonly seen amongst the urban monastics than amongst the forest traditions. Stupa worship, as such, is more common in a monastic system that plays a significant role in the society's education and economics. This clearly in the case of Thailand where short-term ordination is common and monasteries serve as an alternative to national service in the army, and where the less fortunate are absorbed into the monastic system as monks and provided with a systematic education and economic support. However, these are all post-Buddha developments.

Any discussion of the stupa and relic cults should be done in the light of the Buddha exhortation on **the supreme worship** [§7b], after the supernatural manifestations of the sal trees fruiting and flowering out of season, heavenly flowers and sandalwood falling, and sounds of heavenly music and singing in homage of the Buddha:

But, Ānanda, this is not the way to honour, respect, revere, worship, or esteem the Tathāgata. Ānanda, whatever monk, nun, layman or laywoman<sup>106</sup> practises the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, properly practising, living in accordance with Dharma, he honours the Tathāgata, respects him, reveres him, worships him with **the supreme worship**. Therefore, Ānanda, consider thus:

“We will practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, properly practising, dwelling in accordance with the Dharma!”—this is how you should train yourself. (D 16.5.3b/2:138)

### (7e) SEEING THE BUDDHA

**i. Darshan.** The abstract noun *dassana*<sup>107</sup> (Skt *darśana*), “seeing, sight, vision”—which I have translated as a loan word, “**darshan**”<sup>108</sup>—appears a total of at least 12 times in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, all in chapter 5, the Kusinārā Chapter.<sup>109</sup> This shows the importance and popularity of the practice of viewing a holy person such as the Buddha. I have used the modern Indian word “darshan” to reflect the original cultural and religious background that applies here. The ancient Indians who come to “see” the

<sup>103</sup> See Schopen 1997, esp “Monks and the relic cult in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*” (1991:187-201 = 1997:99-113). See also prec n.

<sup>104</sup> Sadler, “Pagoda and monastery: Reflection on the social morphology of Burmese Buddhism,” 1970. Qu in Ray 1994:351 f.

<sup>105</sup> This arrangement is the standard Theravada monastic layout, ie, the separation of the *Buddh'āvāsa* (the Buddha's quarters, ie sacred ground where the main shrine-hall and stupas are located) and the *Saṅgh'āvāsa* (the monastic quarters, ie residential area).

<sup>106</sup> Note here that this important exhortation on the “supreme worship” is addressed to all the four companies (monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). However, there is evidence of a monastic-lay distinction here in Buddhaghosa's commentary: see **Intro (7b)**.

<sup>107</sup> It comes from the verb *dassati* = *dakkhati*, *dakkhiti*, “he sees.”

<sup>108</sup> Webster's 3<sup>rd</sup> International Dictionary on **darshan**: “a blessing held by various Hindus to consist in the viewing of an eminent person (as a religious leader).” See Trainor 1997:177 f & McMahan 1998:10 (digital).

<sup>109</sup> §§5.7 (x2), 5.15 (x5), 5.19, 5.20, 5.24, 5.24, 5.25.



Buddha, do just that: they regard this mere gazing on a holy person to bring upon them great blessing, and also to be in the sight of a holy person is just as blessed.<sup>110</sup>

The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta contains two important passages relating to *dassana* as “seeing” a holy person, and where we can tease out a good understanding of the Buddha’s teaching regarding it. The first passage is **the Upavāṇa episode** [§5.4 f] where the Buddha abruptly instructs Upavāṇa, who is fanning, to step aside. When asked by Ānanda, the Buddha replies that numerous devatas have assembled “for the sight of the Tathāgata” [§5.5]. The more worldly devatas lament: “Too soon will the Eye in the world disappear!” The second passage concerns the four holy places, of which the Buddha declares: “Ānanda, there are these four places that should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega [a sense of urgency]” [§5.8a].<sup>111</sup>

This desire for “seeing” the Buddha<sup>112</sup> is a popular subject of Sinhalese Buddhist hagiography. **The Mahāvamsa**, a Sinhalese hagiographical chronicle, and **the Samanta, pāsādikā**, Buddhaghosa’s Vinaya Commentary, mention attempts to legitimize relic worship. In chapter 17 of the Mahāvamsa, entitled **Dhātu Āgamano** (the Advent of the Relics)<sup>113</sup> (Mahv 17.1-4), Mahinda (c282-222 BCE, said to be Aśoka’s son and brother of the nun Saṅgha, mittā)<sup>114</sup> expresses to the Sinhala king Devānam, piya Tissa his desire to return to India to bring back some Buddha relics:

*Cira, diṭṭho hi sambuddho, satthā no manujādhipa  
Anātha, vāsariṃ avasimha, n’atthi no pūjyam idha.*

Long has it been since we last saw the Buddha, our Teacher, O lord of men:  
We lived without a refuge, we have nothing worthy of worship here. (Mahv 17.2)

The sentiment of this stanza is elaborated in prose in the Samanta, pāsādikā, which further relates how the monk **Mahinda** then brings back relics (the Buddha’s right collar bone) from India which are then enshrined in the Thūpārāma<sup>115</sup> (VA 1:82-86).

Since the early Pāli tradition is *oral*—and where “seeing” (*dassana*) is generally used in a figurative sense with “knowing” (*ñāṇa*)—the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta contains many **visual passages**.<sup>116</sup> If we regard *listening* as the basic teaching and transmission method of early Buddhism (that is, from the Buddha’s time to just before Aśoka or 6<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE), then later Buddhism, especially the Mahāyāna texts<sup>117</sup> is characterized by *seeing* or *vision*. Scholars have noted that hearing is associated with time and sequence (the ear hears sounds arising and passing away in time), while seeing is associated with space (the eye sees objects in space).<sup>118</sup>

<sup>110</sup> See *Pratyupanna-Buddha-Saṃmukha, vasthita-samādhi Sūtra* (tr Harrison, 1990) §14H. Lawrence Babb, “Glancing: Visual interaction in Hinduism,” 1981:396 f, has shown that Hindus not only wish to see their deities, but also wish to be seen by them.

<sup>111</sup> For a useful discussion, see Trainor 1997:174-176.

<sup>112</sup> For a discussion on “seeing” and Sāriputta, see Trainor 1997:179-181; and of Vakkali, 1991:181-183.

<sup>113</sup> It is noteworthy that the term *dhātu* is unknown in Mahā Parinibbāna S; instead, it speaks of *sarīra*. See 7d(1) above.

<sup>114</sup> On Mahinda and Saṅgha, mittā, see Trainor 1997:84-87.

<sup>115</sup> “Maharajah, it has been a long time since we last saw the fully self-awakened one. We have been living with a refuge... Maharajah, it has been a long time since we last saw the fully self-awakened one. We have had no opportunity for venerating, for rising in salutation to, for saluting with lotus-palms, for show proper homage. As such, we fell at a loss. (*Mahā, rāja, amhehi cira, diṭṭho sammā, sambuddho, anātha, vāsariṃ vasimha... Cira, diṭṭho no mahā, rāja sammā, sambuddho, abhivādana. paccuṭṭhāna. aṅjali, kamma. samīci, kamma. karaṇa-t, ṭhānaṃ n’atthi, ten’amha uk-kaṇṭhitā ti*, VA 1:83).

<sup>116</sup> §§3.2; 4; 4.25, 4.28, 4.37; 5.5, 5.9, 5.12, 5.16; 6.19, 6.24.

<sup>117</sup> The Mahāyāna movement is believed to have arisen in India around the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> cent BCE, ie just after Aśoka’s time, but the seeds are present even before that, as evident in our Mahā Parinibbāna S.

<sup>118</sup> David Chidchester, *Word and Light: Seeing, hearing and religious discourse*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992:9. Qu by McMahan 1998:8 (digital) (qv).

Since words are always disappearing as soon as they are pronounced, **Walter Ong**<sup>119</sup> suggests that **orality** is essentially *dialogical* and that, in oral cultures, thought must be “shaped into mnemonic [mnemonic or memory-assisting] patterns ordered for oral recurrence” and consists of rhythmic and repetitive patterns and formulaic expressions” (1982:34). This is in fact how the early Pāli suttas are patterned and propagated.

Mahāyāna sutras, on the other hand, generally emphasize the visual, often using visually-oriented language and metaphor. Mahāyāna texts, like the Sukhāvātī Sūtras, reflect what are to be seen rather than heard.

The emergence of visionary literature is not confined to Mahāyāna Buddhism but is a pan-Indic phenomenon beginning around the first or second century BCE—the same time as the emergence of writing. Parts of the Bhagavadgīta and the Pure Land texts are the most ready example of such visually oriented literature emerging around this period. It is also noteworthy that visualization practices became more elaborate and important in both Buddhism and Hinduism at this time.

(McMahan 1998:10 digital)<sup>120</sup>

**ii. The Eye in the world.** In §5.6a of the sutta below, the Buddha is described as “**the Eye in the world**,” *cakkhum loke*, or freely translated, “the Eye of the world.” The translation “the Eye *in* the world”<sup>121</sup> reflects that the Buddha appears *in* the world but is not *of* the world (spiritual, not worldly), ie one who sees amongst the blind of the world (MA 3:432 = SnA 2:463). The Buddha is also often described as “the one with the eyes” (*cakkhumā*), or as possessing “the five eyes” [§5.6a n]. A broader epithet here is *cakkhumā* (the one with the eyes, seeing one).<sup>122</sup>

The Commentary on Vv 12.5 says: “The Buddha, Blessed One, is the one with the eyes because of the five eyes” (*pañcahi cakkhūhi cakkhumā buddho bhagavā*, VvA 60). **The Culla Niddesa** defines the five eyes (*pañca cakkhu*) as follows:

- (1) The physical eye (*maṁsa, cakkhu*),
- (2) The divine eye (*dibba, cakkhu*) = *yathā, kamm’ūpaga, ñāṇa* or *cutūpapāta, ñāṇa*, the knowledge of how beings fare in life and death according to their karma;
- (3) The wisdom eye (*paññā, cakkhu*), ie the understanding of the 4 noble truths;
- (4) The Buddha eye (*Buddha, cakkhu*), ie the Buddha’s skill in understanding personality and dispositions especially in giving suitable and effective teachings;
- (5) The universal eye (*samanta, cakkhu*), omniscience, the full knowledge of reality.<sup>123</sup> (Nc 235)

**(7f) SENSE OF URGENCY.** A concept closely connected with the “seeing” of the Buddha and holy persons is that of *saṁvega*, “sense of urgency” [§5.7] or “spiritual emotion.” **The Vimāna, vatthu Commentary** defines it as “a knowing that is accompanied by moral fear”<sup>124</sup> (*saṁvego nāma sah’ottapaṁ ñāṇaṁ*. VvA 213). Essentially, “moral fear” is an “other-regarding” conduct moved by a fear, often healthy, of karmic repercussions and moral accountability.

<sup>119</sup> Walter J Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The technologizing of the word*. NY: Methuen, 1982; but see McMahan 1998 n30.

<sup>120</sup> See also Paul Harrison, “Commemoration and identification in *Buddhānasmṛti*,” 1992 & “Buddhānasmṛti in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṁmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra,” 1978.

<sup>121</sup> “**The Eye in the world**,” *cakkhum loke*. See PED: cakkhu for citations. See Ency Bsm: cakkhu (Upali Karunaratna). Readings: (1) Jan Gonda, *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*. The Hague: Mouton, 1963 (esp 22); (2) Alex Wayman, “The Buddhist theory of vision” in *Añjalī: A felicitation volume presented to Oliver Hector de Alwis Wijesekera*, Peradeniya: University of Ceylon, 1970:27-32, repr *Buddhist Insight: Essays by Alex Wayman*, ed George R Elder, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984:153-161 [classification of eyes in the Mahāyāna]; (3) K Trainor, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism*, 1997:175-179.

<sup>122</sup> V 1:16; D 1:76, 85, 100; S 1:27; S 1:121, 134, 159, 210; A 1:116, 124, 4:106; Dh 273; Sn 31, 160, 992, 1028, 1116, 1128; It 108, 115; Vv 12.5, 81.27.

<sup>123</sup> On the Buddha’s omniscience, see **Kaṇṇaka-t, thala S** (M 90/2:125-133) = SD 10.8 Intro (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76) = SD 35.7.

<sup>124</sup> On moral fear (*ottappa*), see SD 1.5 (4) & SD 2.5 (1).

The *Pali-English Dictionary* defines as “agitation, fear, anxiety; thrill, religious emotion (caused by contemplation of the miseries of the world).” It is called “spiritual emotion” in the sense that it moves one to seek a deeper level of self-understanding or one is profoundly moved by a direct vision of reality. It is one of the most powerful of Buddhist terms, and refers to a sort of spiritual crisis that results from directly perceiving the truth.

For a lay person, this usually results in disillusionment with worldly life, often leading to renunciation, whereas in the case of a monastic, it urges him to exert more energy in spiritual practice until the goal is attained. “A feeling of urgency,” *saṁvega*, is an overpowering experience of awe or a religious experience that induces one to ask the deep questions of life and seek their answers. In view of such benefits, **the Somanassa Sutta** (It 37/29 f) declares:

## SD 9(7f)

## Somanassa Sutta

The Discourse on Mental Ease | **It 37/29 f** = SD 16.14 (annotated)  
 Traditional: It 2.1.10 Khuddaka Nikāya, Iti, vuttaka 2, Duka Nipāta 1, Paṭhama Vagga 10  
 Theme: Samvega and its benefit

This was said by the Blessed One: I have heard it spoken by the Arhat [worthy one].<sup>125</sup>

“Bhikshus, possessed of two things, **[30]** even here and now a monk lives with great mental ease, wise in rousing effort,<sup>126</sup> for the destruction of the mental influxes.<sup>127</sup>

What are the two things?

By feeling samvega [spiritual urgency] in those things that evoke samvega, and by rightly rousing effort in feeling samvega.<sup>128</sup>

Bhikshus, possessed of two things, even here and now a monk lives with great mental ease, wise in rousing effort, for the destruction of the mental influxes.”

This is the meaning of what the Blessed One said. The meaning here is spoken thus:<sup>129</sup>

In what evokes samvega, the wise feel samvega,  
 The exertive, masterful monk should consider<sup>130</sup> it wisely.

Thus he dwells exerting himself, habitually at peace, not restless.  
 Yoked to mental calm, he would attain to suffering’s destruction.

This meaning too was spoken by the Blessed One. Thus I have heard.

— evaṃ —

The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (D 16) and **the Saṁvega Sutta** (A 4.118) list the four things or places (*thāna*) that arouse feelings of urgency (*saṁvejanīya-t, thānā*) as:

<sup>125</sup> This is spoken by the laywoman **Khujj’uttarā** in connection with teachings she heard from the Buddha at Kosambī. Sāmāvatī, chief queen of Udena, had instructed her to listen to the Buddha’s teaching and repeat them before her (Sāmāvatī) and her 500 women attendants at the palace. (ItA 24 ff). Also tr as SD 16.14 with Introd.

<sup>126</sup> *Yoniso āradhho*. Later, *yoniso padhānena* (see below in sutta).

<sup>127</sup> “**Mental influxes**,” *āsava*. See below §10d n.

<sup>128</sup> *Saṁvejanīyesu thānesu saṁvejanena saṁvegassa ca yoniso padhānena*.

<sup>129</sup> *Saṁvejanīyesu thānesu, saṁvijjethēva paṇḍito | ātāpī nipako bhikkhu, paññāya samavekkhiya || Evaṃ vihārī ātāppī, santa, vutti anuddhato | ceto, samatham anuyutto, khayāṃ dukkhassa pāpuṇe ti ||*

<sup>130</sup> *Samavekkhiya*, fr *samavekkhati*, “he considers” = *sam* (prefix denoting focus) + *ava* (down) + √IKṢ, to see; also *apekkhati*, he looks down up, ie, looks on (with equanimity). ***Samavekkhati*** here connotes both a constant mindful KhpA 235 = Vism 4.63/135ness of the 3 characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self) and the practice of meditation.

- (1) the place of the Nativity (Lumbini Park, modern Rummidei);
- (2) the place of the Great Awakening (Uruvelā on the Nerañjarā river, modern Ureli on the Lilanja river);
- (3) the place of the First Discourse (the Deer Park at Isipatana, modern Sahet-Mahet); and
- (4) the place of the Mahā Parinirvana (Kusināra, modern Kashgar) (D 16.5.8/2:140; A 4.118/2:120 f).

Buddhaghosa gives **the eight occasions invoking urgency** (*aṭṭha samvega, vatthu*), as follows: birth (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), illness (*vyādhī*), death (*marāṇa*), suffering of loss (*apāya, dukkha*), suffering of the past rooted in the round of rebirth (*atīte vaṭṭa, mūlaka dukkha*), suffering of the future rooted in the round of rebirth (*anāgate vaṭṭa, mūlaka dukkha*), and suffering of the present rooted in the search for food (*pac-cuppanne āhāra, pariyeṭṭhi, mūlaka dukkha*).<sup>131</sup>

The *Buddhist Dictionary* defines *samvega* as “the sources of emotions’ or, of a sense of urgency” of which there are eight: “birth; old age; death; the suffering in the lower states of existence; the misery of the past rooted in the cycle of rebirth; the misery of the future rooted in the cycle of rebirth; and the misery of the present rooted in the search for food.”<sup>132</sup> As such, *samvega* would be<sup>133</sup> the kind of experience that the Bodhisattva Siddhattha had when he saw the four sights.<sup>134</sup>

In the well known Buddha legend, when the Bodhisattva as a young prince saw **the four sights**, he was overcome by a powerful spiritual experience termed *samvega*.<sup>135</sup> A possible English rendition of the term would be “fear and awe” although this expression is more applicable to a theistic belief-system than to a non-theistic one like Buddhism. The closest, albeit awkward, translation is perhaps “sense of urgency” or spiritual urgency. Torkel Brekke, in his book, *Religious Motivation and the Origins of Buddhism*, explains that

what makes this realization [the inherent suffering of life] so powerful in the case of the prince is the dissonance between his original cognition of his own life and this new knowledge that he himself must grow old, suffer and die...

This cognitive dissonance gives the prince a strong feeling of discomfort, which motivates him to equalize the discrepancy. Obviously the facts of life cannot be changed, and the only solution is to bring his own life into some sort of harmony with these facts. (Brekke, 2002:63)

The spiritual urgency experienced by the young Siddhattha was by no means unique. Many others in his time have left their homes in search of a higher liberating truth. These were the recluses or *śramaṇā* (Pali *samaṇā*) who, at the same time, found no affinity with the established priestly religion of the *brāhmaṇā* or brahmins.

The Canon provides a number of examples of *samvega*. **The Cūḷa Taṇhā, saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 37) records how Moggallāna roused a sense of urgency (for spiritual development) in Sakra, Vessavaṇa and the gods of the 33 by making the celestial Vejayanta Palace shake and tremble through his psychic powers (M 37.11/1:254 f). **The Brahma, deva Sutta** (S 6.3) relates how Brahmā Sahampati arouses *samvega* in Brahma, deva’s mother, by appearing before her and instructing her the proper way of making religious offerings. **The Vana Saṃyutta** (ch 9 of the Saṃyutta Nikaya) consists of 14 suttas all dealing with the rousing of the sense of urgency for spiritual development (S 9/1:197-205). In **the Mahā Hatthi, padōpa-ma Sutta** (M 28), Sāriputta speaks of *samvega* in this manner:

Avusos, when that monk thus recollects the Buddha, thus recollects the Dharma, thus recollects the Sangha, if equanimity supported by the wholesome is not established in him, then he rouses a feeling of urgency thus:

<sup>131</sup> KhpA 235 = Vism 4.63/135; see also UA 2-5 :: UA:M 2-6.

<sup>132</sup> Vism 4.63 = KhA 235; D 3:124; S 1:197; A 1:43; It 30; J 1:138; Nm 406.

<sup>133</sup> On the 4 sights, see **Deva, dūta S** (M 130/3:178-187) = SD 2.23 (2003), and **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 26.14/1:163) = SD 1.11 (2003).

<sup>134</sup> See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:2.3.

<sup>135</sup> Like the growing number of Buddhist terms that are being anglicized (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, nirvana, karma, sramana, samsara, etc), it is practical to use “*samvega*” as the English borrowing from the Pali/Sanskrit.

‘It is a loss for me, it is no gain for me, it is bad for me, it is not good for me, that when I thus recollect the Buddha, thus recollect the Dharma, thus recollect the Sangha,<sup>136</sup> equanimity supported by the wholesome<sup>137</sup> is not established in me.’<sup>138</sup>

Avusos, just as when a daughter-in-law sees a father-in-law, she rouses a sense of urgency (to please him), even so, when that monk thus recollects the Buddha, thus recollects the Dharma, thus recollects the Sangha, if equanimity supported by the wholesome is not established in him, then he rouses a feeling of urgency.

But, avusos, if when he thus recollects the Buddha, thus recollects the Dharma, thus recollects the Sangha, equanimity supported by the wholesome *is* established in him, then he joyfully approves of it. At that point, avusos, much has been done by the monk. (M 28.10/1:186 f)

We see here *samvega* expressed as a self-acknowledgement of spiritual lack and to work towards spiritual development.

**A K Coomaraswamy**’s brief but instructive article on *samvega*,<sup>139</sup> is probably the first on the subject. He says that there are two aspects or phases of *samvega*: (1) the emotional “shock” that we have just noted, often through realizing the transient nature of things, and (2) a subsequent experience of peace transcending such emotions as fear or love, an experience related to the apprehension of truth. He defines *samvega* as follows:

a state of shock, agitation, fear, awe, wonder, or delight induced by some physically or mentally poignant experience. .... The shock is a consequence of the aesthetic surfaces of phenomena that may be liked or disliked as such. The complete experience transcends this condition of ‘irritability’. ...[M]ore than a merely physical shock is involved; the blow has a *meaning* for us, and the realization of that meaning, in which nothing of the physical sensation survives, is still a part of the shock. These two phases of the shock are, indeed, normally felt together as parts of an instant experience; but they can be logically distinguished... In the first phase, there is really a disturbance, in the second there is the experience of a peace that cannot be described as an emotion in the sense that fear and love or hate are emotions. (Coomaraswamy in Lipsey I 1977:182-184)

As an example of *samvega*, Coomaraswamy cites the story of **the elder Vakkali** who, on first meeting the Buddha, is captivated by the Buddha’s physical “beauty,” joins the order and spend his days gazing at the Buddha’s person. The Buddha, however, helps Vakkali overcome the “idolatrous experience” so that he does not become “attached” to the visual image—thus Vakkali makes the transition from shock to delight, and from delight to understanding.<sup>140</sup>

**Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu**, in his otherwise inspiring paper on *samvega*,<sup>141</sup> unfortunately gives it rather narrow definition as “the oppressive sense of shock, dismay, and alienation.” This definition would be part of the first connotation—that of “emotional shock—in Coomaraswamy’s definition. Ṭhānissaro, however, insightfully points out that the young Siddhattha experiences “*samvega*” (he proposes we adopt this into

<sup>136</sup> For the stock passages on these three recollections, see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.2.9/2:93) & **Dhaj’agga S** (S 11.3/1:219 f).

<sup>137</sup> “Equanimity supported by the wholesome” (*upekkhā kusala, nissitā*) is the equanimity of insight, the sixfold equanimity of neither attraction nor aversion towards agreeable and disagreeable objects that appear at the six sense-doors (MA 2:227). “Strictly speaking, the sixfold equanimity pertains only to the arahant, but is here ascribed to the monk in training because his insight approximates to the perfect equanimity of the arahant” (M:ÑB 1222 n337).

<sup>138</sup> Comy: **The recollection of the Buddha** is undertaken here by recalling that the Blessed One spoke this simile of the saw, and **the recollection of the Dharma** by recalling the advice given in the simile of the saw, and **the recollection of the Sangha** by the virtues of the monks who can endure such abuse without giving rise to a mind of hate. (MA 2:227)

<sup>139</sup> “*Samvega*, ‘Aesthetic shock,’” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7 1942-43:174-179. On **Nathan Katz**’s short discussion, see 1979:59-61.

<sup>140</sup> See Roger Lipsey, ed. *Coomaraswamy. Selected Papers: Traditional Art and Symbolism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (Bollingen Series 89), 1977:181.

<sup>141</sup> Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, “Affirming the truths of the heart: The Buddhist teachings on *samvega* and *pasada*” [1997]. High View, WV: Bhavana Society, 1998.



the English vocabulary) when, according to popular Buddhist legend, Siddhattha sees the first three sights (an old man, a sick man, a dead man),<sup>142</sup> but on seeing the fourth sight (the recluse), experiences *pasada* [7h here], “clarity and serene confidence” (Ṭhānissaro) or “calm and clear heart of faith” (Piya Tan)—this is what “keeps samvega from turning into despair” (Ṭhānissaro 1998:3).<sup>143</sup>

In noting the usage of *samvega* in the Mahā Paribbāna Sutta in connection with the four holy places, Coomaraswamy explains that such an experience suggests “the shock of conviction that only an intellectual art can deliver, the body-blow that is delivered by any perfect and therefore convincing statement of truth” (1942-43:179). In other words, notes Trainor,

they draw attention to the visual and emotional aspect of the experience of *samvega*, and they link it with the apprehension of truth, thus tying together the experience of seeing and knowing.

(Trainor 1997:176)

Trainor (1997:176) goes on to show this close connection between “seeing” and “knowing” in the Buddhist tradition, as in such canonical terms (quoted by Coomaraswamy) like

*ehi,passika*, “come and see” for oneself (D 2:93 = M 1:37; S 4:339; A 1:158; B 25.50);  
*ñāṇa,dassana*, “knowledge and vision, knowing and seeing” that is used to describe the experience of fulling understanding the “nature of things as they really are” (*yathā,bhūtam*) (V 4:26, 195; S 5:423; A 3:19, 200; 4:99, 336, 5:2 f, 311 f; Pm 1:33, 43 f, 2:244; full discussion at DA 1:220).

For further discussion on samvega, see **Somanassa Sutta** (It 2.1.10) in SD 16.14.

**(7g) BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE.** The relic cult [7a] led to the construction of stupas [7c, 7d], which at once led to the rise of Buddhist pilgrimage. Pilgrims came from far and wide, not only from India itself but from far beyond. From the 4th through the 7th centuries, Buddhist scholars in China periodically realized that their Buddhist texts and notions were at often variance with their Indian antecedents. They tried to correct the problem either through the introduction of additional translations or by clarifying differences between Buddhist and native Chinese ideas.

The early Chinese masters like Dao’an (312-385) and Sheng’yu (445-518) were aware of the profusion of inauthentic texts. They composed Chinese catalogues of Buddhist works<sup>144</sup> “in large part precisely for the purpose of separating the dragons from the snakes and the jewels from the stones.”<sup>145</sup> Most of the early translators of Buddhist texts were Central Asian or Indian monks, like Kumāra,jīva, who has taken the original sutras in China and translated them in order to transmit Buddhism to the Chinese.

At the end of the 4th century, there began an important new development: Chinese monks themselves travelled all the way to India to retrieve the Buddhist texts. The best known of these pilgrims were **Faxian** 法顯 (401-414), **Xuanzang** 玄奘 (629-645) and **Yijing** 義淨 (671-695) who made valuable records of their travels:

Faxian      *Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms* 佛國記 (India at the beginning of the 5th cent).

<sup>142</sup> See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:2.3.

<sup>143</sup> On the advantages of the life of renunciation, Ṭhānissaro writes: “For people whose sense of samvega is so strong that they want to abandon any social ties that prevent them from following the path to the end of suffering, Buddhism offers both a long-proven body of wisdom for them to draw from, as well as a safety net: the monastic sangha, an institution that enables them to leave lay society without having to waste time worrying about basic survival. For those who can’t leave their social ties, Buddhist teaching offers a way to live in the world without being overcome by the world, following a life of generosity, virtue, and meditation to strengthen the noble qualities of the mind that will lead to the end of suffering.” (1998:4).

<sup>144</sup> Dao’an 道安 composed his catalogue in 374, Seng’you 僧祐 in 515 and Zhisheng 智昇 in 730.

<sup>145</sup> Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮. *Gikyō kenkyū* 疑經研究 (Studies on Apocryphal Sutras). Kyoto: Jimbun kagaku kenkyūsho, 1976:99. Quoted by Charles Muller, “East Asian Apocryphal Scriptures: Their origins and role in the development of Sinitic Buddhism,” [http://www.tyg.jp/tgu/school\\_guidance/bulletin/k6.acmuller/acmuller.htm](http://www.tyg.jp/tgu/school_guidance/bulletin/k6.acmuller/acmuller.htm) 2004:1.



- Xuanzang *Record of the Western Regions* 大唐西域記 (Central Asia and India in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> cent).  
 Yijing *Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms in the Southern Archipelago* 南海寄歸內法傳 (SE Asia and India in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century).

In 629, during the Tang dynasty, the young and charismatic monk, **Xuanzang** 玄奘 (ca 596-664),<sup>146</sup> the most famous and successful of the Chinese pilgrims, secretly left China for India. His purpose was “to gaze on the sacred traces [relics], and earnestly to seek the law,”<sup>147</sup> that is, to bring back Sutras to China so that the truth teaching would prevail. His 16 years of travels (629-645) are recorded in the **Xiyuji**<sup>148</sup> and immortalized in Chinese mythology as the **Xiyouji**.<sup>149</sup>

The veneration of the “traces” of the Buddha and his disciples was (and is) for the most part a very unstructured activity.

It consisted largely of various levels of prostration and as series of conventionalized gifts: flowers, incense, colored powders, perfumes and unguents, banners and bits of cloth, parasols, and occasionally, although rarely, cooked meatless food. Little has been recorded in the way of verbal formulae; offerings might be accompanied by a vow declaring the desired application of merit originating from the gift. More elaborate acts, also optional, might include decorating a site or monuments with lamps, hiring musicians to play on the premises, sweeping the environs of a shrine. Both Hsüan Tsang [Xuanzang] and in the Pali Mahāvamsa describe royal rituals in which relics were placed for a brief time over a king’s head; the Chinese pilgrim also saw them placed upon a throne. The majority of these actions represent conventionalized gestures of honor and submission; they have been identified as such both within the Buddhist tradition itself and within the greater Indian [south and south-east Asian] culture from which Buddhism freely adopted them. (Nancy Falk, “To gaze on the sacred traces,” 1977:287 f)

Despite the idiosyncrasies of the pilgrims at these ancient sacred sites, there is one behaviour common to all of them, that is, **the rightwise circumambulation** (*pradakṣiṇa*, P *padakkhiṇa*)<sup>150</sup> around the sacred person, object, or place. This transformative aspect of the Buddhist pilgrimage has been specially studied by Paul Mus in his *Barabudur*.<sup>151</sup> Nancy Falk notes that “[s]imilarly, although again this could be

<sup>146</sup> On Xuanzang and other Chinese pilgrims, see Piya Tan, “Buddhism in China” §§14-19 in *History of Buddhism*, Singapore, rev ed 2004. See also Sally Hovey Wriggins, *Xuanzang: A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road*, Boulder, CO: WestView Press, 1996.

<sup>147</sup> Shaman Hwui Li [**Huili**], *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang* [Datang Dacu’ensi Sanzang Fashi Juan, T50.2053], tr Samuel Beal. London: Kegan, Paul, 1911:44. Hui Li (completed by Yan Cong). Abr Eng tr **Li Yongxi**, *The Life of Hsuan tsang: The Tripitaka-Master of the Great Tzu En Monastery*, Peking: Chinese Buddhist Association, 1959. This contemporary biography of Xuanzang covers his childhood, studies, travel to India and events until his death. The last four fascicles were completed by **Yan Cong** (and others) after Hui Li’s death. A few sections are omitted in this otherwise fine tr Li’s reconstruction of Sanskrit names, however, are not always accurate. First half also tr in **Samuel Beal**, *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1973 (repr of 1911 Kegan Paul ed.)

<sup>148</sup> The Tang emperor Taizong [T’ai Tsung] (r 626-649), impressed by Xuanzang’s knowledge and character, urged him to leave the monkhood and accept a ministerial post. Xuanzang refused and was keen to translate the sutras he had brought back. The emperor, eager to learn from Xuanzang, constantly interrupted him to ask him about the western countries. Xuanzang might have written the **Record of the Western Regions** (大唐西域記 Datang Xiyuji) (containing descriptions of over 130 countries) and presented it to the emperor to prevent further interruptions! This work has been tr as *Si-yu-ki* [Xiyuji]: *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1884; pt 1 is Faxian’s travel records, Foguoji 佛國記.

<sup>149</sup> Partially tr by **Arthur Waley** as *Monkey: Folk Novel of China*., NY: Evergreen, 1958: delightful reading. As a companion to this, Waley wrote *The Real Tripitaka*, NY: Macmillan, 1952, an enjoyable account of Xuanzang’s life, with much information not available elsewhere in English. **Anthony Yu**, *The Journey to the West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977-83, 4 vols: an unabr tr, not as exciting as Waley’s version, but is more literally faithful to the original, giving a broader account of Chinese views and attitudes.

<sup>150</sup> *Padakkhiṇa* = *pa* (directional prefix) + *dakkhiṇa* (right), ie, keeping one’s right to the sacred person or object; alt trs “clockwise, sunwise.”

<sup>151</sup> **Paul Mus**, *Barabudur: Sketch of a History of Buddhism based on Archaeological Criticism of the Texts*. [French, *Barabudur*, 2 vols, Hanoi, 1935, repr 1 vol, 1978] Eng tr Alexander W Macdonald, 1998, xxvii, 354pp, 14

accidental, the original Buddhist tour of the ‘Four Great Miracle’ sites would have proceeded in a rightwise direction” (1977:289) and in her footnote, she says “From the site of the Buddha’s birth, Lumbinī, in northern Bihar; southeast to Bodh Gayā, the place of enlightenment; northwest to Kusināgara, place of the *parinirvāṇa*” (op cit n26).

The four holy places have been mentioned earlier [7c]. We shall now look at them again with regards to Buddhist pilgrimage. In this connection, the Buddha speaks of the benefits of pilgrimage to the four holy places [§5.8ab]: a faithful “son of family” (*kula,putta*), faithful “monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen” should reflect in the following manner:

“Here the Tathāgata was born,”

“Here the Tathāgata attained supreme awakening,”

“Here the Tathāgata turned the Wheel of the Dharma,”

“Here the Tathāgata attained the remainderless nirvana-element,”

Anyone who dies with a calm and bright heart of faith<sup>152</sup> while making a pilgrimage of these shrines, at the breaking up of the body after death, will be reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world. (D 16.5.8ab/2:140 f)

Three points are of interest here: the pilgrim, the act of pilgrimage and the benefits of pilgrimage. **The Buddhist pilgrim** addressed first by the Buddha is the “son of family” (*kula,putta*) [§5.8a]. Then follows the paragraph exhorting the fourfold assemblies—the monks, the nuns, the laymen and the laywomen—as pilgrims. For the young to be addressed first and separately is significant. **The Samaya Sutta** (A 3:65-67) speaks of the “five right times for striving,” that is, the ideal conditions for spiritual practice:

1. When one is young.
2. When one is healthy and fit.
3. When there is no difficult in finding food.
4. When there is social harmony and fellowship.
5. When there is unity, harmony and fellowship in the Saṅgha. (A 5.54/3:65-67)

Secondly, the pilgrimage should be done with a proper mental disposition, that is, properly reflecting on relevant act of the Buddha related to the holy place. Such reflections, when properly, are actually forms of “recollection of the Buddha” (*Buddhānussati*).

**The (Agāta,phala) Mahānāma Sutta** (A 6.10) records the Buddha’s teaching to the lay disciple Mahānāma the Sakya regarding the training practice (*nissaya,vihāra*) of “a noble disciple who has reached the fruit and understood the teaching” (*ariya,sāvako āgata,phalo viññāta,sāsano*). Clearly the description here refers to a lay follower who has attained to streamwinning or higher. The teaching given, however, is simple. The Buddha speaks on how the noble disciple should practise the recollections (*anussati*) of the Buddha, of the Dharma, of the Saṅgha, of moral virtue, or generosity, and of the devas. At the end of each exposition, the refrain runs thus:

This, Mahānāma, is called the noble disciple who dwells righteous amongst an unrighteous generation, who dwells unafflicted amongst an afflicted generation, *who has entered the stream of the*

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plates, col illus, index hb. “Mus’s *Barabudur* is primarily a study of the *stūpa* form and symbolism, with emphasis on the monument’s continuity with the brahmanic fire altar. He viewed the monument itself, together with the altar, as an attempt to break through the barriers of time and space. In this sense, its symbolism complements and is complemented by that of the ritual *pradakṣiṇā* that was such a constant feature of its cult. It was in this context that Mus raised the question of the *pradakṣiṇā* symbolism and its historical antecedents (see esp pp 135-39).” (Falk 1977:288 n21)

<sup>152</sup> “With a calm and bright heart of faith,” *pasanna,citta*, alt tr “with a clear mind of faith.” On faith (*saddhā*), see 7h below.

*Dharma*,<sup>153</sup> and cultivates the recollection of the Buddha,...[and so on for each of the recollections.]<sup>154</sup> (A 6.10.2/3:285)

As the lay disciple cultivates each of the recollections, his mind is not seized by lust, hatred or delusion, but becomes upright (*uju,gata*):

With an upright mind, he gains the inspiration of the goal, the inspiration of the Dharma, gladness (*pāmuḍja*) connected with the Dharma.

When he is gladdened, rapture (*pīti*) arises, his body becomes tranquil, and he experiences happiness.

For one who is happy, the mind becomes concentrated.<sup>155</sup> (A 6.10.2/3:285)

**The Sa,upādisesa Sutta** (A 9.12), dealing with the three trainings (*sikkhā*), speaks of streamwinners who are all “accomplished in moral virtue, but is moderately accomplished in concentration, moderately accomplished in wisdom,”<sup>156</sup> that is, their meditative attainment are at best “moderate” (*mattaso kārī*), which the Commentary glosses as “limited, not accomplished” (*pamāṇa,kārī na paripūra,kārī*, AA 4:174). This probably means that they are unable to attain full concentration, that is, they are not dhyana-attainers (*jhāyī, jhāna,lābhī*).

It is also possible that the phrase “moderately accomplished in concentration” (*samādhismim mattaso kārī*) refers the dhyana “with mental influxes, partaking of merit, ripening in birth-basis [accumulating the aggregates]” (*s’āsavā puñña,bhāgiyā upadhi,vepakkā*) (M 117.7, 13 etc). In any case, it is clear that one does not need to attain dhyana to become a streamwinner. As such, it is not really difficult to gain awakening.<sup>157</sup> This generous albeit somewhat enigmatic remark made by the Buddha at the conclusion of the sutta confirms such a facility for awakening:

Not until now, Sāriputta, has this Dharma discourse been declared to the monks, the nuns, the laymen or the laywomen. What is the reason for this? Lest after listening to this Dharma discourse they become heedless! However, Sāriputta, through my being questioned, I have spoken this Dharma discourse. (A 9.12.10/4:381 f)

**(7h) PASANNA,CITTA.** The joyful state that permeates the faithful devotee and Buddhist saint (more so in the latter) is that of “a calm and bright heart of faith,” *pasanna,citta* [§5.8c], alternately translatable as “a clear mind of faith.”

There are two kinds of “faith,” *saddhā*:

- (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlika,saddhā*), baseless, irrational or a priori (before the fact) faith, blind faith. (M 2:170);
- (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati,saddhā*), a posteriori (after the fact) faith, faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8 401,23); also called *avecca-p,pasāda* (S 12.41.11/2:69).

“Wise faith” is synonymous with (2). *Amūlika* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected.”<sup>158</sup> **Gethin** speaks of two kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective:

<sup>153</sup> On the “stream of the Dharma,” see **Miga,sālā S** (A 6.44/3:347-351, 10.75/5:137-144).

<sup>154</sup> *Ayam vuccati Mahānāma ariya,sāvako visama,gatāya pajāya samappatto viharati, sa,vyāpajjhāya pajāya avyāpajjhō viharati, dhamma,sotam samāpanno buddhānussatim bhāveti.*

<sup>155</sup> *Uju,gata,citto kho pana Mahānāma ariya,sāvako labhati attha,vedam, labhati dhamma,vedam, labhati dhammūpasamhitam pāmuḍjam, pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pīti,manassa kāyo passambhati, passaddha,kāyo sukham vediyati, sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.*

<sup>156</sup> *Sīlesu paripūra,kārī hoti, samādhismim mattaso kārī, paññāya mattaso kārī.* The same is said of monastics in **(Mattaso,kārī) Sikkhā S** (A 3.85/1:231 f). In fact, the teachings of (Mattaso,kārī) Sikkhā S (for monks) is elaborated in **Sa,upādisesa S** (A 9.12) for the benefit of the laity. See Bodhi’s remarks on this, 2001:56 f.

<sup>157</sup> See Piya Tan, “The layman and dhyana,” SD 8.5 (2005).

<sup>158</sup> V 2:243 3:163 & Comy.

Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith in its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or confidence towards something or somebody...the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.

(Gethin 2001:207; my emphases)

Faith (*saddhā*), in the positive sense, according to **the Milinda,pañha** and **the Dhamma,saṅgāṇī Commentary**, has the characteristic of appreciation (*sampasādana,lakkhaṇa*) and of endeavour (*sampak-khandana,lakkhaṇa*).<sup>159</sup> Of these two characteristics of faith (*pasāda*), **N Dutt** notes that<sup>160</sup>

- (1) it is faith that generates zest or joyful interest (*pīti*);
- (2) it is self-confidence that generates effort (*virīya*).

The former (faith as appreciation) refers to the affective (or feeling) aspect of faith, corresponding to *pasāda*, which has an interesting range of meanings: clarity, brightness, joy, appreciation, faith, serenity.<sup>161</sup> The latter (faith as endeavour) refers to the conative (or willful) aspect of faith, that is, faith moves one to action (such as charity, moral virtue, learning the scripture, meditating, etc).

As **Jayatilleke** rightly notes, here Dutt (reflecting the commentarial explanation) is speaking of two aspects of *saddhā*, “and not of two different uses of the word altogether.”<sup>162</sup> When Dutt says that the pīti-generating faith is an antidote to vicikicchā (spiritual doubt) and moha (delusion), Jayatilleke criticizes him for “confusing the affective with the cognitive aspect of faith as ‘belief’.” (id).

However, pace Jayatilleke, it should be said that at any time, one characteristic of faith may dominate. In fact, Jayatilleke mentions a third aspect of faith, besides the affective and the conative, that is, the cognitive, of which he notes:

The Nettippakaraṇa draws attention to the cognitive aspect of *saddhā*, when it says inter alia that “faith has the characteristic of trust and the proximate state of belief (inclination)” (*okappana,-lakkhaṇā saddhā adhimutti,paccupaṭṭhānā*, Nett 28).

In fact, we could well see the two aspects of *saddhā* (faith) here as the affective (“trust”) and the conative (“inclination”) rather than the cognitive. Furthermore, we can safely say, based on the commentarial explanation (the Milinda,pañha and Dhamma,saṅgāṇī Commentary) above, that the early Buddhists simply noted two kinds of faith: the rooted (wise faith) and the unrooted (blind faith). This has to do with wisdom (*paññā*): the former is rooted in wisdom (that is, direct experience of reality) and the latter merely on the basis of external authority (for example, another’s word or scripture). Simply put, when faith—whether affective, conative or cognitive—lack wisdom (the direct experience of reality), it is said to be “rootless” (*amūlaka*); if it is rooted in wisdom, then it is wise faith (*avecca-p,pasāda*). This is, I think, as far as we can go when we try to apply modern categories (affective, conative and cognitive) to early Buddhism (which, strictly speaking, does not have those categories).<sup>163</sup>

Let us return to our definition of “faith.” The word *pasanna* is the past participle of *pasīdati*, and the noun is *pasāda*. The *Pali-English Dictionary* defines these words as follows (as they are important words, the definitions are given here in full):

**Pasīdati** [*pa + sad*] 1. to become brighten, to brighten up PvA 132 *mukha,vanno* ~. — 2. to

<sup>159</sup> Miln 34 & DhsA §304.

<sup>160</sup> N Dutt, “Place of faith in Buddhism” in *Indian Historical Quarterly* 16, 1940:639. See also ERE: Faith & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:387.

<sup>161</sup> Jayatilleke agrees on this, 1963:387. For further discussion on *pasāda*, see **Sampasādanīya S** (M 28/3:99-116 = SD 10.12).

<sup>162</sup> Jayatilleke 1963:387.

<sup>163</sup> It is interesting to note here how one would categorise the “academic faith” of those who take Buddhism merely as a professional field of interest and livelihood, for example. Academic standards clearly do not allow blind faith, and yet academic faith cannot be said to be “rooted,” in the sense that that “wise faith” has spiritual liberation as its goal.



be purified, reconciled or pleased; to be clear & calm, to become of peaceful heart (*mano* or *cittaṃ* ~); to find one's satisfaction in (loc), to have faith D 2:202; S 1:98, 2:199 *sutvā dhammaṃ* ~; A 3:248; Sn 356, 434, 563; Nc 426 = *saddahati, adhimuccati okappeti*; Vv 50.13 *mano pasīdi*, aor; Vism 129; Miln 9; DhA 3:3 = he is gracious, ie good; VvA 6 (better vl *passitvā*); PvA 141. —pp *pasanna* (qv). See also *pasādeti* & *vippasīdati*.

**Pasanna** (adj) [pp of *pasīdati*] **1.** clear, bright Sn 5:50 ~*netta*; KhA 64 & 65 ~*tila,tela,vaṇṇa*, where Vism 262 reads *vippasanna*~; Vism 409 (id). — **2.** happy, gladdened, reconciled, pleased J 1:151, 307; Vism 129 *muddha*~. — **3.** pleased in one's conscience, reconciled, believing, trusting in (loc), pious, good, virtuous A 3:35 *Satthari, dhamme saṅghe*; S 1:34 *Buddhe*, 5:374; Vv 5.9; Sn 698; Dh 368 *Buddha,sāsane*; J 2:111; DhA 1:60 *Satthari*. Often combined with *saddha* (having faith) V 2:190; PvA 20, 42 (*a*~), and in cpd. ~*citta* devotion in one's heart V 1:16; A 4:209; Sn 316, 403, 690; Pv 2.1.6; SnA 460; PvA 129; or ~*mānasa* Sn 402; VvA 39; PvA 67; cp *pasanena manasā* S 1:206; Dh 2. See also *abhippasanna* & *vippasanna*.

**Pasāda** [fr pa + sad, cp Vedic prasāda] **1.** clearness, brightness, purity; referring to the colours (“visibility”) of the eye (J 1:319 *akkhīni maṇi,guḷa,sadisāni paññāyamāna pañca-p,pasādāni ahesum*); SnA 453 (*pasanna,netto*, ie *pañca,vaṇṇa-p,pasāda,sampattiyā*). — **2.** joy, satisfaction, happy or good mind, virtue, faith (M 1:64 *Satthari*; S 1:202; A 1:98, 222 *Buddhe* etc, 2:84, 3:270 *puggala*~, 4:346; SnA 155; PvA 5, 35. — **3.** repose, composure, allayment, serenity (Nett 28, 50; Vism 107, 135; ThaA 258).<sup>164</sup>

Both the verb *pasīdati* and its adjective (in the past participle) *pasanna* refer to the action (to show faith; faithful) and the result of faith (inspired with faith; faithful). Understandably these shades of meanings overlap in part. Such a state of mind is induced and maintained by acts of lovingkindness (*mettā bhāvanā*). This is the mental state that should suffuse one especially when one goes on a pilgrimage [7g]. And yet with such a mind, one is already there in a pilgrim's state of mind.

After the Buddha has instructed on how “the faithful son of family” [§5.8a] and “the faithful monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, too” [§5.8b] should arouse samvega in themselves while at the holy places, he goes on to declare the benefit of such a pilgrimage:

Anyone who dies with a calm and bright heart of faith (*pasanna,citta*) while making a pilgrimage of these shrines,<sup>165</sup> at the breaking up of the body after death, is reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world. (D 16.5.8c/2:141)

It is important to examine both the letter and the spirit of this statement. While it might be spiritually good to die *while* on pilgrimage, this is not so stated here. “A calm and bright heart of faith” is a mind that is at least temporarily free from defilements, which would as such be basis for a good rebirth (that is, if this were one's last thought before dying). A similar remark is made at the end of **the Mahā Rāhul'ovāda Sutta Rāhula**, in connection with breath meditation:

...when the mindfulness of in-and-out-breathing is cultivated and often developed in this manner, even the last breath leaves with your knowledge, not without it.”<sup>166</sup> (M 62.30/1:425 f)

<sup>164</sup> This last definition is abridged. The PED format is slightly revised.

<sup>165</sup> “While making a pilgrimage of these shrines,” *cetiya,carikaṃ ahiṇḍantā*, lit “while wandering on a walking-tour of these shrines.” **Shrines**, *cetiya*. We have here what some would regard as the basis for stupa worship: see **Intro (7c)** for the nature of stupa worship.

<sup>166</sup> When a dying person is mindful of his breath, he dies calmly with mindfulness and full awareness. The **Visuddhi,magga** says: “Herein there are three kinds of (breaths that are) final because of cessation, that is to say, final in existence, final in absorption, final in death. For, among the various kinds of existence, in-breaths and out-breaths occur in the sense-sphere existence, not in the form-existence nor the formless existence. That is why there are final ones in existence. In the absorptions, they occur in the first three but not in the fourth. That is why there are final ones in absorption. Those that arise along with the sixteenth consciousness preceding the death consciousness cease together with the death consciousness. They are called ‘final in death’. It is these last that are meant here by ‘final’” (Vism 8.241/p291 f). On the 17 thought-moments, see Abdhs 4.6, rev tr Bodhi 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1999:153 ff. For a brief explanation, see GP Sumanapala, *An Introduction to Theravada Abhidhamma*, Singapore, 1998:137 (ch 8).



The benefit of keeping a clear mind, especially at the moment of dying, is clear: it brings one a good rebirth. However, it is very important to note that pilgrimages, relic worship and stupa worship, in themselves, at best bring a good rebirth (that is, if one “dies with a calm and bright heart”)—but one still remains within the grasp of samsara.

Most importantly, in the highest sense, pilgrimage spots, relics and stupas are less places than they are wholesome states of mind.<sup>167</sup> This teaching is clearly stated in **the Vatthūpama Sutta** (M 7), where the Buddha declares to the brahmin Sundarika Bhāradvāja, who thinks that washing in a sacred river could bring one liberation, and merit, and wash away one’s evil deeds:

For the pure at heart, it is always the holy day in spring [Phalgu].  
 For the pure, it is always the precept day [poshadha].  
 For one who is pure, whose deeds are pure,  
 His religious practice is always successful.

Bathe right here, brahmin,  
 To make yourself a secure refuge for all beings.  
 If you speak no falsehood,  
 If you harm not any living being,  
 If you do not take the not given,  
 Faithful and free from stinginess,  
 What need is there for you to go to Gayā?  
 Any well is Gayā for you (to wash at)!

(M 7.20/1:39) = SD 28.12

**(7i) AUTHENTICITY OF RELICS.** Legend has it that during the visit of Mon monks to Sri Lanka, Vijaya Bāhu (1059-1114) miraculously produced a copy of the eye-tooth relic of the Buddha which was presented to king Anawrahta [Anuruddha] of Burma (r 1044-77), who in turn installed it in the Shwezigon Stupa in Pagan. This gift of Buddha relic would become a popular diplomatic gesture from the Sinhalese. By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was customary that every ruler of Sri Lanka must have the Buddha’s eye-tooth relic in his custody to legitimize his reign. After Parākrama Bāhu I, no Sinhalese king ever actually regained control of the whole island, but the tooth accompanied the recognized king to various strongholds and refuges. Towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the inevitable happened: the tooth relic (or its replica, some claimed) was captured and brought to the Paṇḍu kingdom in South India.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Kublai Khan, the Mongol emperor of China, sent an envoy to Sri Lanka requesting that the tooth relic be sent to him. The reigning king having obliged by sending not one, but two tooth relics, which Kublai received with great pomp and ceremony. Having become well known throughout the Eastern world as the possessor of the Buddha’s eye tooth, the Sinhalese king apparently exploited this reputation in a diplomatic manner by trading freely in dubious Buddha relics. The real tooth remained jealously guarded.

In March 1992, Shi Fazhao (a Singapore Chinese Mahāyāna monk) led a pilgrimage to Sri Lanka to receive relics of the Buddha, Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Sīvali, Mahā Kaccāyana, and Bakkula, in a ceremony presided by Sri Lanka’s then President, Ranasinghe Premadasa. In 2003, a Mahāyāna monks from Johor, Malaysia, presented the Buddhist Fellowship (Singapore) with the relics of the Buddha, the five monks (Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji), Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Upāli, Anuruddha, Sīvali and Ānanda. In early 2003, it was announced that the Moggallāna relic had multiplied from two to three!

It is truly propitious for Singapore to attract so much relics within a year. In fact, a large Chinese Mahāyāna temple in Singapore plans to build a S\$40m Buddha tooth-relic temple in her Chinatown for devotees and tourists.<sup>168</sup> The almost sudden profusion of Buddhist relics in Singapore can be explained in one of two ways: if they have a verifiable history, they came down from one of the original eight portions of relics distributed by Doṇa [§6.25b]; or, they were “consecrated relics,” that is, manufactured by pious

<sup>167</sup> See also An Yang-Gyu, “Relic worship: A devotional institute in early Buddhism,” 2002a:159.

<sup>168</sup> Such wealth is, I think, better invested in a Buddhist college or university, whose graduates are then supported as qualified lay teachers and ministers by temples, associations and groups they serve.

hands by way of burning or ageing suitable materials, such as ivory and crystals.<sup>169</sup> Like Buddha images, such objects, once consecrated, would be regarded as sacred relics by the pious and open-minded.

Authenticity is for historians and scholars: the immediately palpable is for the pious, even if it is at a price. When religiosity is externalized or concretized, there is always a good chance for venal practices (simony) and superstitions. There is great wisdom in the Buddha's exhortation that we seek refuge in ourselves and no other [§2.26].

**(7j) RELIC THEFTS.** In the last century, extensive study has been done by scholars on Christian relic veneration, and relic theft was one of the interesting issues addressed. Patrick Geary, in his *Furtiva Sacra* (1978), for example, has contributed an instructive analysis of relic theft and its religious significance in the Christian west from the 9<sup>th</sup> through the 11th centuries.<sup>170</sup> Kevin Trainor, in *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism* (1997)<sup>171</sup> discusses relic theft in connection with the Buddha relics in India and Sri Lanka, centering his discussions around the Pali texts—especially the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta—and two late Sinhalese hagiographical chronicles, the Thūpa,vaṃsa and the Dhātu,vaṃsa.<sup>172</sup>

The fascinating story of the Buddha relics may be said to begin where the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta closes [§§6.24-28]. When word spread that the Buddha had attained parinirvana, eight powerful groups asked for a share of the Buddha relics, but were turned down by the Mallas of Kusinārā who had been taking care of the mortuary rites for the Buddha. Although the sutta does not explicitly say it, growing tension leading to armed conflict was clearly evident [§6.25]. The imminent danger of war over the relics is depicted in the basreliefs of the Sañcī stupa.<sup>173</sup>

The appeal of relics is clearly not just spiritual, but also mundane due to their portability and promise of power. In this connection, Trainor's observation is soberly instructive:

This episode [of the imminent war over the Buddha relics] lays bare a fundamental tension inherent in the Buddhist relic cult, even as it illuminates its appeal. Relics, as material objects that one can possess, fully engage the human capacity for attachment and manipulation. Therein lies part of their attraction. They provide access to religious power in a particular time and place, and, through their easy portability, facilitate the creation of new centers of sacrality. Yet there is something potentially disturbing about this in terms of the Buddha ideal of non-attachment. Relics can be the object of desire; they encourage the human tendency to cling. What is striking about this passage is the way in which it invokes the Buddhist ideal of forbearance and nonattachment, even as it affirms a religious practice that appears to encourage a kind of acquisitiveness. The episode serves to instruct the faithful that the Buddha's relics are worthy of veneration, while it simultaneously demonstrates the potential threat that the practice represents to the tradition's fundamental religious ideals. (Trainor 1997:119 f; cf Gombrich 1988:119 f)

With the averting of a major disaster, smaller ones abound. The Dīgha Commentary provides some interesting details about the earliest incident of relic theft in the Canon. Although the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta presents the brahmin **Doṇa** as a person of some authority [§6.25], he appears in Comy as to be somewhat of a conniver. Before distributing the relics, Doṇa shows the relics to the assembly, who upon seeing their sorry state, were overcome with sadness and lamentation. While they were engrossed in their grief, Doṇa hides the Buddha's right eye-tooth in his turban (DA 1:7, 2:609; Mahv 17.20).<sup>174</sup> Sakra (P *sakka*; Skt *śakra*), the king of the gods, concerned that Doṇa would be unable to pay due honour to the relic, steals it and spirits it away to the Tāvataṃsa heaven and enshrines it in the Cūḷā,maṇī Shrine which already contains the hair relic of the Bodhisattva during the great renunciation (J 1:65; BA 284).

The Commentary continues by saying that while distributing the relics, Doṇa discovers his loss but is unable to complain of it because he has taken it by theft. Since it is too late for him to request for a share,

<sup>169</sup> Including dog's tooth: see Appendix.

<sup>170</sup> See Trainor 1997 117 n72 for bibliography.

<sup>171</sup> Trainor 1997:117-135.

<sup>172</sup> See also J S Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 2004:109 f.

<sup>173</sup> Marshall & Foucher, *Monuments of Sāñchī*, 1940 1:112-119, 214 f, pls 15, 61.

<sup>174</sup> DPPN: Cūḷāmaṇicetiya, mentions only "the right collar bone."

he can only ask for the measuring urn, which is after all connected with the relics (*dhātu, gatika*) so that he can build a stupa over it (DA 2:609).

The **Dhātu,vaṃsa** (a late Pali hagiographical chronicle of Sri Lanka, probably early 14<sup>th</sup> cent) builds on the episode of Doṇa's theft of the eye-tooth and its subsequent theft by Sakra. The Dhātu,vaṃsa goes on to relate how Doṇa hid a second eye-tooth between his toes, and a third inside his clothing. The second relic is subsequently stolen by the naga-king Jayasena, who enshrines it in his abode. The third is taken by an unnamed resident of Gandhāra who, seizing it "with good intent" (Dhatv 18-19), takes it back to Gandhāra and shrines it. Understandably, Doṇa was visibly devastated by his multiple losses but is consoled by Sakra himself.<sup>175</sup>

The Buddha relics of Rāma,gāma (situated on the Ganges bank) has a fascinating history or mythology behind it as recorded in Thūpa,vaṃsa, a late Pali hagiographical chronicle of Sri Lanka (13<sup>th</sup> cent). It recounts how the Rāmagāma relics were washed into the waters during a great flood. The naga-king, Mahākāḷa, saved the relics and enshrined them in great splendour in his Mañjerika nāga abode, worshipping them with lavish offerings.<sup>176</sup>

**(7k) RELICS, POWER AND PROFIT.** For Buddhists, the mobility or portability of sacred relics provided a new relationship with the Buddha, the arhats and later saints.

Indeed, the transfer of relics to, and their discovery in, Southeast Asia and East Asia became so common that one might argue, as Brown [1981] has noted in the context of Christendom, that "Translations—the movement of relics to people—and not pilgrimages—the movement of people to relics—hold the center of the stage in late-antique and early-medieval piety" (pp 89-96).

(Brian O Ruppert, "Relics and relic cults," EB:B (2003:716)

Ruppert further notes a few disturbing details in Buddhist history, on the social-political uses of relics:

Imperial patronage of relic veneration in China, Sri Lanka, and other areas of Asia constituted both a demonstration of the ruler's largess and a response to the fervor of local Buddhists. For example, the writings of Chinese pilgrims such as Faxian (ca 337-418) indicate that the Chinese were aware of the practice among Asian rulers of conducting relic processions to bolster their authority, and the large crowds that attended such processions gave evidence of faith among the populace. Indeed, a famous tract by Han Yu (768-824)<sup>177</sup> argued forcefully against welcoming the relic of the Buddha's finger from Famensi into the Chinese imperial palace in 819. Han Yu demonstrated in his criticisms of believers' behavior the extent of their devotion, whereby some burned their heads and fingers, and discarded clothing and large numbers of coins. On the occasion of another procession of Buddha relics in 873, worshippers variously offered their arms, fingers, and hair in acts that symbolically matched the bodily sacrifices that Śākyamuni as a bodhisattva had made in the *jātaka* tales. (Ruppert, "Relics and relic cults," EB:B (2003:718)

Such "repositories of power,"<sup>178</sup> inevitably encourages the commodification of religiosity. Tambiah notes the tragic consequences of the "vulgar materialization" of the amulet industry in Thailand, which very well applies to the cult of relics today, too, with these words:

It is inevitable in the Thai case that this process of vulgar materialization, this law of gravity, should have further consequences. One is that the amulet moves from a context of donation and love (*mettā*) to a context of trade and profit: It is converted into a highly salable good and enters

<sup>175</sup> See Trainor 1997:132-135. On Doṇa, see (**Pāda**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2"37 f) @ SD 36.13 (2.1).

<sup>176</sup> See Trainor 1997:124-135.

<sup>177</sup> Han Yu (韓愈) (768-824), a founder of Neo-Confucianism and poet, who launched a "movement for the language" (古文運動). Without imitating the ancient style that dominated the Han to the Tang dynasties, he hoped to reform its ornate style, heavily limited by parallel sentences.

<sup>178</sup> See Marcel Mauss, *The Gift* (NY: Norton, 1976) which focusses on "power in objects of exchange) & S J Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*, 1993:339.

the bazaar and marketplace. When it does so, it also stimulates the production of fakes and becomes a pawn in the usual publicity media of advertisements, catalogues, magazine articles, books, and the mythology of miracles. A second consequence is that the more amulets are produced, the more they deteriorate in their mystical powers (despite the initiatory spiral of prices of rare antiques). This means that new amulets come into fashion and many others are condemned to be forgotten or less desired: moreover, the propensity to accumulate amulets increases, in the simple arithmetical calculation that the more you possess, the more clout you have. Thus the comparison of the relative virtues of amulets lead to mystical power itself, which is both limitless and rare, being graduated, weighed in a balance, or quantified in terms of money.

(S J Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*, 1993:336)

## 8 The Buddha as a Roman Catholic saint: Barlaam & Josaphat

Apparently, the relics of the Buddha made fabulous journeys even into the West—and outside of Buddhism. Few mediaeval Christian names are better known than those of **Barlaam and Josaphat**,<sup>179</sup> who were credited with the “second conversion” of India to “Christianity,” after the country had relapsed to “paganism” following the mission of the Apostle Thomas. Barlaam and Josaphat were remembered in the roll of saints recognized by the Roman Catholic Church with the festival day of **27 November**. In the Greek Church, Iosaph (Josaphat) was commemorated on **26 August**, while the Russians remember both Barlaam and Ioasaph, together with the latter’s father, king Abenner (Śuddhōdāna), on **19 November** (2 December, Old Style). Sir Henry Yule once visited a church at Palermo, Italy, dedicated to “**Divo Josaphat**.”

In 1571, the Doge Luigi Mocenigo presented to King Sebastian of Portugal a **bone and part of the spine** of St Josaphat. When Spain annexed Portugal in 1580, these sacred treasures were removed by Antonio, the Pretender to the Portuguese throne, and ultimately found its way to Antwerp, Belgium, where they were preserved in the cloister of St Salvator.

After the European colonists had settled in India with the arrival of Roman Catholic missionaries, some of them were struck by the similarities between episodes and features of the life of St Josaphat and those of the Buddha, as is clearly evident from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese writer **Diogo do Couto** who declared this fact. By the 1850s, European scholars doing comparative study of the legend of St Josaphat [“Bodhisat”] and the life of the Buddha, “came to the startling conclusion that for almost a thousand years, the Buddha in the guise of the holy Josaphat, had been revered as a saint of the principal Churches of Christendom”! (D M Lang, introduction, *Barlaam & Josaphat*, 1967:x).

## 9 The Buddha’s life and death

**(9A) THE LIFESPANS OF THE BUDDHAS.** A Buddha (that is, any fully self-awakened being) has the power to live for a whole lifespan (*kappa*, Skt *kalpa*) of his time, but no Buddha does so because the term is shortened by reason of climate and the food he takes (DA 2:413). In the Mahāpadāna Sutta (D 14), the Buddha mentions the various lifespans of the 6 past Buddhas: Vipassī, 80,000 years; Sikhī, 70,000 years; Vessabhū, 60,000 years; Kakusandha, 40,000 years; Konāgamana, 30,000 years; Kassapa, 20,000 years.<sup>180</sup> (Interestingly, none of these Buddha’s lifespan is mentioned to be as long as a “fortunate world-cycle,” *bhadda,kappa*, as claimed by Mahāsīva Thera).<sup>181</sup>

Then, in the Sutta, the Buddha goes on to declare,

My own lifespan now, bhikshus, is trifling and short, quick to pass. One who lives long (here) lives only for more or less a hundred years (*mayham bhikkhave etarahi appakam āyu-p.pamānam parittam lahusam, yo ciram jīvati so vassa,satam appam vā bhiiyo*). (D 14.7/2:4)

<sup>179</sup> See, for example, Graeme MacQueen’s “Changing Master Narratives in Midstream: *Barlaam and Josaphat* and the Growth of Religious Intolerance in the Buddhalegend’s Westward Journey.” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 5 1998:144-166.

<sup>180</sup> On the past Buddhas, see **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14) = SD 49.8 Intro (2).

<sup>181</sup> DA 2:554; SA 3:251; AA 4:143; UA 323. See below here (c)(2).



In **Vepulla Pabbata Sutta** (S 15.20/2:192), the Buddha says exactly the same of “the lifespan of the Magadhans.” The phrase “more or less a hundred years” (*vassa,sataṃ appaṃ vā bhīyyo*) is stock.<sup>182</sup>

No Buddha, however, dies before his dispensation is firmly established. Some Buddhas live longer than others. They who are long-lived have only direct disciples<sup>183</sup> who hear the Dharma in his presence, and at their final passing, their relics are not scattered, but have a single stupa erected over them (SnA 194 f). Short-lived Buddhas hold their *uposatha*<sup>184</sup> fortnightly. Others (like Kassapa Buddha) may hold it only once every six months; yet others (like Vipassī Buddha) only once every six years (ThaA 1:62). In cases where the Buddha does not appoint the observance of the Pātimokkha (eg Vipassī, Sikhī, Vessabhū) the Teaching quickly dies after his parinirvana. However, where the Buddha appoints the Pātimokkha (such as Kakucchanda, Konagamaṇa, Kassapa, Gotama), the holy life lasts very long (V 3:7 f; cf. D 2:48).

**(9b) THE BUDDHA GOTAMA’S LIFESPAN.** Our Buddha (Gotama/Gautama) lived a full life of 80 and taught the Dharma for 45 years.<sup>185</sup> Understandably, the death of such a dynamic and charismatic holy person is deeply mourned and, amongst the deeply faithful, deeply denied. There is evidence that the early Buddhists found it truly problematic why the Buddha had died at the age of 80 when the common belief then was that the average human lifespan was actually 100 years (S 2:94 f; B 26.21; BA 54, 273).

There are two distinct accounts in the MPS regarding the Buddha’s lifespan. The first is found in **the Beluva episode** of the Buddha’s overcoming his serious illness [§§2.23-24], and the second, **the Cāpāla shrine episode** of the Buddha’s relinquishment of his lifespan [§§3.9-10]. While the first involves the Buddha’s extending his lifespan until such time he has addressed the fourfold assemblies, the latter is the letting go of his will to live beyond this extended period.

**9b.1 The Beluva episode.** Buddhaghosa explains the Buddha’s overcoming his serious illness at Beluva [§2.23] as a result of his own physical strength and from his meditative attainment of fruition (*phala,samāpatti*). This new strength, derived from the attainment, helps him to both overcome the illness and extend his life. Buddhaghosa goes on to explain that there are two kinds of “life-formation” (*jīvita,-saṅkhārā* or *āyu,saṅkhāra*), namely, (1) life itself by which life is propelled on, and (2) the attainment of fruition. The former, acquired at birth, refers to a kind of “life-faculty” (*jīvit’indriya*) which maintains and vitalizes the living physical body, whose quality and length is further determined by past karma, and whose length is determined at birth.<sup>186</sup> The latter is nurtured in the current life, and according to Buddhaghosa, it is this latter that is referred to in the MPS (DA 2:547).<sup>187</sup>

It is important to note that Buddhaghosa defines the life-impetus [*jīvita,saṅkhāra*] as the attainment of fruition. By so defining it, he understands that the Buddha overcomes his illness by attaining the attainment; he does not prolong his life-faculty by *iddhi*, but simply counteracts his illness by attaining the attainment. His introduction of the term “the attainment of fruition” should be understood in contrast with the mystical power, *iddhi*. He seems to ignore the belief in the Buddha’s power to live on by *iddhi* by introducing *phala-samāpatti* (the attainment of fruition).

(An Yang-Gyu, “Buddhaghosa’s view of the Buddha’s lifespan,” 2000:136 f; emphasis added)

There are two kinds of *phala,samāpatti*: (1) temporary attainment (*khaṇika,samāpatti*), and (2) attainment in the form of great insight (*mahā vipassanā*). The temporary attainment suppresses pain while one remains in the attainment. As soon as one emerges from the attainment, the pain pervades the body again. The attainment in the form of great insight, however, suppresses pain very well. After emerging from that

<sup>182</sup> D 14.7/ 2:4 = S 4.9/1:108 = 15.20/2:192; qu at DA 2:413.

<sup>183</sup> *Sammukha sāvaka*, Skt *saṃmukha śrāvakā*.

<sup>184</sup> Skt *uposadha*, Observance or ecclesiastical convocation to recite the *pātimokkha/prātimokṣa*.

<sup>185</sup> Jesus Christ (c6 BCE-c30 CE) lived for about 36 years but his public ministry lasted for only about two to three years. Muhammad (c570-632), who lived for about 62 years, taught publicly for some 19 years (c613-632).

<sup>186</sup> Rhys Davids aptly renders the first kind of *jīvit’indriya* as “life till allotted time” (D:RD 2:106; cf Divy 203).

<sup>187</sup> **The Dhanu-gaha Sutta** (S 20.6/2:265 f) says that the life-formation runs faster than the speed at which as man could catch a flying arrow. Comy there says that *āyu,saṅkhāra* refers to the physical life-faculty (*rūpa,jīvit’indriya*), but it is impossible to describe the breakup of formless phenomena (ie mental states, because according to the Abhidhamma, they break up 16 times faster than physical states) (SA 2:227).



state, pain re-arises only after a long time. Buddhaghosa says that the Buddha has attained the temporary attainment before, but this is the first time that his attainment is in the form of great insight (DA 2:547).<sup>188</sup>

**9b.2 The Cāpāla shrine episode.** At the **Cāpāla Shrine**, the Buddha thrice tells Ānanda that he (the Buddha) is able to live longer if he wishes to—for a full life-span or the remainder of it. The Buddha explains that anyone who has developed the 4 bases of spiritual power (*iddhi, pādā*)<sup>189</sup> will be able to live for a full life-span (*kappa*, about 100 years) or a little more (*kappāvasesa*) (of about 120-160 years) [§§3.3-5].<sup>190</sup> Ānanda, however, does not understand the meaning or implication of the Buddha’s statement and remains silent, even after being informed three times (D 2:103; cf D 3:77).<sup>191</sup> The Commentary explains that Ānanda’s mind is obsessed (*pariyuṭṭhita, citta*) by **Māra’s exhibiting a fearsome sight** that distracts him, preventing him from appreciating what the Buddha says. The Buddha then dismisses Ānanda who takes his leave and sits down at the foot of the nearby tree (DA 2:555).

The whole story here sounds clearly contrived, that is, presenting the Buddha almost as a doting father-figure who is unable to make up his own mind, and for that the loyal “son” Ānanda is blamed later by the elders of the order. This is an important piece of evidence showing that the early Buddhists had genuine difficulty in accepting the Buddha’s passing when he was 80.

What would have happened if Ānanda had actually been mindful and invited the Buddha to remain for his full lifespan (or for a world cycle)? How would the Buddha then answer Māra’s reminder of the Buddha’s statement made just after the great awakening that he would only pass away when the fourfold assemblies of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen has been established [§§3.7-8]. It is evident from the Buddha’s statement that he does not say that he would pass away *immediately* upon the establishment of the fourfold assemblies, but it effectively could be any time *after* that, which would be an indefinite period!

SIGNIFICANCE. There is a vital significance to the Buddha’s renunciation of his life-formation. The Buddha’s awakening does not depend on a God-idea, the gods, or any teacher. The Buddha’s awakening, too, does not entail that he should declare it to others, but when later requested by the Brahmā Sahampati, a non-returner (*anāgāmi*), he teaches the Dharma for our benefit.<sup>192</sup> In the **Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), it is recorded that when Ānanda does not invite the Buddha to extend his life-span to continue teaching, he renounces the life-formation and passes into final nirvana. This gentle unobtrusive spirit of humility and wisdom is at the heart of the Buddhist mission, reminds us that the highest truth is not (and cannot) be forced upon another, but like nourishing food, it can only be offered to others, but they must themselves partake of it.

**9b.3 Iddhi, pādā.** The *iddhi, pādā* are explained in the **Chanda Sutta** (S 51.13/5:268 f). The term is elaborated according to the Sutta method in the Vibhaṅga (Vbh 216-220), and according to the Abhidhamma method at Vbh 220-224, where they are factors of the supramundane paths.<sup>193</sup> The Commentaries resolve *iddhipāda* as *iddhiyā pādāni*, “bases for spiritual power” and as *iddhi, bhūtaṃ pādāni*, “bases

<sup>188</sup> See Vism 700 where Buddhaghosa explains the purpose of gaining the attainment of fruition, ie for the abiding in bliss here and now.

<sup>189</sup> **Iddhi, pādā** (Skt *ṛddhi, pāda*), the 4 bases of spiritual power, namely: will or intention (*chanda*), energy or effort (*virīya*), consciousness or mind (*citta*) and mental investigation (*vīmaṃsa*) (D 3:77, D 3:213 = M1:103 = 2:11; D 3:221; Vbh 216). The suttas generally say that the *iddhi, pādā* bring one the 6 superknowledges (**abhiññā**), viz, (1) psychic powers (*iddhi, vidha*), (2) the divine ear or clairaudience (*dibba, sota*), (3) knowledge of the mind of the others (mind-reading) (*ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*), (4) the divine eye or clairvoyance (*dibba, cakkhu*), (5) recollection of past lives (*pubbe, nivāsānussati*), (6) the extinction of all mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya*) (D 34.1.7(10)/3:282; M 4.27-32/1:22 f, 6.14-18/1:34 f, 77.31-36/2:17-23; S 15.9/2:178, 51.2/5:254; A 5.23/3:17-19; Pug 27, 239). Of these 6 superknowledges, the first 5 are mundane, only the last is supramundane (connected to spiritual liberation) For a definition of the 6 super-powers (with similes), see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.87-98/1:78-84) = SD 8 (2005). It is important to note that although the *iddhi, pādā* lead to the attainment of various psychic powers (*iddhi*), ie (1)-(5), it is the mental cultivation or meditation aspects that are directly related to the extension of lifespan, and not the psychic power in themselves. See Ledi Sayadaw, *The Manuals of Buddhism*, 1965:333-338 & Gethin 2001:94-97.

<sup>190</sup> On this tr see (9c) quoting D 26.

<sup>191</sup> The Buddha actually lists 16 occasions [§§3.41-47] when he has mentioned to Ānanda regarding his lifespan!

<sup>192</sup> See “**Why did the Buddha hesitate?**” = SD 11.1.

<sup>193</sup> See also Vism 385/12.50-53 & VbhA 303-308.

which is spiritual power.”<sup>194</sup> As such, the best translation denoting both senses would be “bases of spiritual power.”

*Iddhi* is derived from the verb *ijjhati* (to prosper, succeed, flourish): it originally means success, but by the Buddha’s time “had already acquired the special nuance of spiritual success or, even more to the point, spiritual power” (S:B 1939 f n246). The term here has two senses: (1) success in the exercise of the psychic powers (*iddhi, vidha*),<sup>195</sup> and (2) success in the effort to win liberation. The two converge in arhat-hood, which as *āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*, is both the sixth *abhiññā* (in continuity with the psychic powers) and the final fruit of the noble eightfold path. The *iddhi, pādā* (bases of spiritual power), as such, are the supporting conditions for the exercise of psychic powers (*iddhi*).

What we can deduce from the text is that the Buddha simply gives up his will to live (*āyu, saṅkhāra*). As Rhys Davids note, the earliest meaning of *āyu, saṅkhāra* is the will to live (D:RD 2:106); and, as noted by Shwe Zan Aung and Rhys Davids, *saṅkhāra* may be used as a synonym for *cetanā* (volition), since it is the foremost of the *samskaras*<sup>196</sup> (Kvu:SRD 323 n4). In her *Identity and Experience*, Sue Hamilton makes these helpful remarks:

The way the *saṅkhāras* act as a “fuel” for the individual’s continuing *samsāric* existence is not difficult to understand from all of the foregoing. We can see the way volitions in one life condition a subsequent life and how this process is reinforced through its cyclic nature. We have also seen how fundamentally this is embedded in the psychological nature of the human being, in the desire for conditioned existence, for example. This probably explains why the term *saṅkhāra* is also used together with *āyu* or *jīvita* to mean the “life-force.” In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, we read that the Buddha can either deliberately hold on to this life force [D 16.2.23/2.99] or give it up and die [D 16.3.10/2:106]. Elsewhere it is used as one of the defining characteristics of a live person: without it there is only a dead body [M 1:296].<sup>197</sup> (Sue Hamilton 1996:78)

**The Visuddhi, magga** (Vism 8.2-3/229) says that there are two kinds of death: timely (*kāla, maraṇa*) and untimely (*akāla, maraṇa*). Timely death itself comes about in three ways: through the exhaustion of merit, or through the exhaustion of life-span, or through both. Gethin (2001:95) notes that all this suggests that there are three factors involved: the maximum potential lifespan of a human being in general; the particular potential lifespan of a given individual; and “adventitious circumstances” that might interfere with this and bring about an untimely death.

What I have termed “adventitious circumstances” are, of course, understood to work within the law of *karma-vipāka*, and are determined in principle by what is called “destructive” (*upaghātaka*) or “intervening” (*upacchedaka*) *kamma*.<sup>198</sup> This kind of *kamma* overrides and supplants weaker *kamma*, and may be both skilful and unskillful. Presumably then, whether or not an individual’s potential lifespan is fulfilled depends on any unskillful destructive *kamma*. When these principles are applied to the question of the *iddhi-pādas* and the prolongation of life, what seems to be envisaged—at least as far as the Pāli commentaries are concerned—is that anyone in whom the *iddhi-pādas* are fully developed will have complete mastery over any untimely death and live out his full potential lifespan. In other words, the development of the *iddhi-pādas* constitutes a skilful “destructive” *kamma* of a kind that overrides any unskillful “destructive” *kamma*.

(Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:95)

The Commentaries all agree that the Buddha has not used *iddhi* (psychic power) to prolong his life-span (as held by the Mahāsaṅghika, for example). **The Kathāvatthu** refutes the notion that lifespan is the result of *iddhi* [9c]: one’s lifespan is shaped by karma done in previous lives, and is determined at the

<sup>194</sup> DA 3:1007; MA 2:69; SA 3:250; AA 2:50.

<sup>195</sup> S 51.11/5:263-66, 51.14/5:269-71 51.17/ 5:274 f.

<sup>196</sup> I have anglicized the Skt form for *saṅkhārā*.

<sup>197</sup> On this last note, where *āyu, saṅkhāra* is combined with heat (*usmā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), see Hamilton 1996 chs 1 & 5; cf D 2:335.

<sup>198</sup> Vism 8.2-3, 19.13-16; cf Pm 5.11-13. Gethin’s fn.

moment of conception.<sup>199</sup> In keeping with this notion, Buddhaghosa explains that one who has *iddhi* would be able to avert untimely death (KvuA 121).<sup>200</sup> However, there is a limitation to *iddhi*: it cannot prevent ageing, falling ill, dying and the fruiting of karma. It is impossible for *iddhi* to make permanent what is not permanent (KvuA 189 f). As such, it is clear that Buddhaghosa does not accept the prolongation of life by *iddhi*.

Buddhaghosa does not comment much on the Cāpāla shrine episode, but simply interprets it as part of the Buddha's skillful means to lessen Ānanda's grief. "Why does the Buddha address him up to three time?" Buddhaghosa asks: "In order to lessen his sorrow by putting the blame on him, saying, 'Yours is the wrongdoing; yours is the fault,' [§3.40] when, later on, he was asked by the elder, 'Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan!'" (DA 2:555). Dhammapāla, too, concurs with Buddhaghosa:

For the Blessed One sees thus, "This person has an extremely affectionate heart towards me. He will, later on, on hearing of the causes of an earth-tremor and my abandoning of my life-formation, ask me to live on for a long time. Then I will put the blame on his head saying, 'Why did you not ask me before?' For human beings are not so troubled with their own faults. Therefore his sorrow will be assuaged."  
(UA 325)<sup>201</sup>

In other words, Ānanda is made to feel regret rather than sorrow at the Buddha's parinirvana, and in this manner, Ānanda's sorrow is assuaged by his regret!<sup>202</sup>

### (9c) THE MEANING OF KAPPA

**9c.1 Kappa as "lifespan."** The problem of the Buddha's lifespan is resolved when we better understand the meaning and usage of the word *kappa* (Skt *kalpa*). There is some uncertainty regarding what is meant by "**life-span**" (*kappa*) here, that is, it could mean any of the following:

- (1) A "**world-cycle**" or "**great cycle**" (*mahā,kappa*), that is, one full cycle or age of the world (V 3:109; S 2:185 = It 17; Miln 108; PvA 21), described as comprising of four stages—expanding, stable, contracting, stable—of a pulsating universe (A 2:142);
- (2) A "**fortunate cycle**" (*bhadda,kappa*), that is, a world-period when there is a Buddha. This is probably one of the four "incalculables" (*asaṅkheyyā*): in this case, it would be the stable period (*vivaṭṭa-t,thāyi,kappa*) after the universe's re-evolution (*vivaṭṭa,kappa*), which, according to the Commentaries is the opinion of one Mahāsīva Thera.<sup>203</sup>
- (3) A **human "life-span"** (*āyu,kappa*). The Milinda,pañha (Miln 141) and the Commentaries<sup>204</sup> take *kappa* as meaning a human lifespan, ie, *appaṃ vā bhiiyo ti vutta,vassa,satato atirekaṃ vā*, "'more or less,' that is to say, up to more than a 100 years" (DA 2:554; SA 3:554 UA 323; BA 65). Edgerton, in his *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (sv *kalpāvaśeṣam*), too argues for this interpretation.

Lifespan is the result of merit and it is clear from the MPS that the Buddha could live out his whole lifespan (*kappa*) if he wishes to. The terms *kappa* and *kappāvasesa* in the phrase, *kappaṃ vā tiṭṭheyya kappāvasesaṃ vā* [§§3.3-5] are problematic. It literally translates as "(one) could remain for a cycle or the remainder [what is left] of a cycle"—both "a cycle" and "the remainder of a cycle" effectively refer to the same duration. It is like saying to a guest, "You could remain for this (whole) afternoon or for the rest of this afternoon." *The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, gives this definition:

<sup>199</sup> See Jaini, "Buddha's prolongation of life," 1958:548.

<sup>200</sup> Death can occur in any of 4 ways: (1) through the expiration of the lifespan; (2) through the expiration of the (productive) karmic force; (3) through both (1) & (2); (4) through the intervention of a destructive karma. See Abhs §34 = Abhs:BRS 220.

<sup>201</sup> *Passati hi bhagavā "ayaṃ mayi ativiya siniddha,hadaḍo, so parato bhūmi,cāla,karaṇaṃ ca āyu,saṅkhār'os-sajjanaṃ ca sutvā mama cira-t,thānaṃ yācissati, athāhaṃ 'kissa tvaṃ puretaraṃ na yācasī ti tass'eva sīse dosam pātesāmi, sattā ca attano aparādhena na tathā vihaññanti, ten'assa soko tanuko bhavissati ti* (UA 325). On Ānanda's "extremely affectionate heart," see eg §5.13.

<sup>202</sup> See An Yang-Gyu, "Buddhaghosa's view of the Buddha's lifespan," 2000:140-142.

<sup>203</sup> DA 2:554; SA 3:251; AA 4:143; UA 323. See PED svv Kappa; Vivaṭṭa; Saṃvaṭṭa.

<sup>204</sup> *Ettha ca kappaṃ ti āyu,kappaṃ, tasmim tasmim kāle yaṃ manussānaṃ āyu-p,pamāṇaṃ hoti taṃ paripuṇṇaṃ karonto tiṭṭheyya, kappāvasesaṃ ti: appaṃ va bhiiyō ti vutta,vassa,satato atirekaṃ vā* (DA 2:554).

*kalpâvaseṣam*, adv (= Pali *kappâvasesam*), “more than a kalpa” in the phrase (*kalpam*) vā... vā (*nirdiṣet*, “he might expound”) Lalita, vistāra (ed Lefmann, Halle, 1903) 436.6; (*tiṣṭhet*, “would last”) Divy 201.9; 207.1. So Foucaux, apparently supported by Pāli DA 554.32 (on D 2:103.4) *appam vā bhiyyo ti, vutta, vassa, satato* (= *kappam* = *āyu, kappam*) *atirekam vā*, “a little more,” or “in excess of the stated 100 years” (the extreme life of a man, which Pali exegesis takes as the meaning of *kappam* here). So also Tibetan on Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra (ed Waldschmidt, 1950-51) 15.10 = Divy 201.9... (Adapted & refs expanded in parts)

As we have noticed [9a], none of the past Buddhas mentioned has their lifespan remotely reaching a “world-cycle” (*kappa*), or any one of its four stages (*asaṅkheyya kappa*). However, there is much more canonical evidence for taking *kappa* to mean a human life-span. We find this statement in **the Cakka-vatti Sihanāda Sutta** (D 26):

Keep to your pastures, bhikshus, to the haunts of the fathers. If you do so, your life-span will increase....

And what is the length of life for a monk? Here, a monk develops the bases of spiritual power which is the concentration of intention accompanied by effort of will, concentration of energy accompanied by the effort of will, concentration of consciousness accompanied by the effort of will and concentration of mental investigation accompanied by effort of will. By constantly practising these four bases of spiritual power he can, if he wishes, life for a full life-span or for more than the life-span. That is what I call the length of life for a monk.

(D 26.28/3:77) = SD 36.10

It is clear here that it is not only the Buddha, but any monk who has cultivated “the bases of spiritual power” (*iddhi, pādā*), will be able to live a full life-span or what remains of the longest possible life-span at that time. The bases of spiritual power here refer to the conscious development of psychic skills (*iddhi*), including the knowledge of the destruction of defilements (S 51/5:254-290).

As such, in the phrase “for a full life-span or the remainder of it [§3.3-5],” I understand the former “life-span” (*kappa*) as referring to the *karmic* life-span, ie, as inherited from our karma, and the latter as the natural or “statistical” life-span of the times. In other words, with *iddhi*, we are able to extend our “allotted” years to a *full* life-span (about 100-120 years in the Buddha’s and our own times).

Further evidence is found in scriptural common sense, as attested by the fact that many of the arhats – like Ānanda (DhA 2:99) and Mahā Kassapa (Skt Mahā Kāśyapa) (SA 2:173)—are said to live to a full 120 years, though the oldest of them, **Bakkula**, is said to have lived to 160, well over “the remainder” of the full life-span! **The Ghaṭa Sutta** (S 21.3/2:276-278) record this interesting conversation between the Buddha’s two chief disciples:

“Avuso,” Sāriputta confesses, “compared to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna, we are like a little piece of gravel compared to the Himalayas, the king of mountains. For the venerable Mahā Moggallāna is of such great spiritual power and might that **if so he wishes he could live on for a (full) cycle (*kappa*)**.”<sup>205</sup>

“Avuso,” replies Moggallāna, “compared to the venerable Sāriputta (in wisdom) we are like a little grain of salt compared to a barrel of salt. For the venerable Sāriputta has been extolled, lauded and praised in many ways by the Blessed One.” (S 2:276 f)

The Commentaries record that a certain Mahāsīva Thera was not satisfied with this explanation and held that the Buddha meant to live out this “fortunate aeon” (*bhadda, kappa*) itself (in which five Buddhas have arisen), but could not do so because his body was subject to the laws of old age (DA 2:554; BA 191). In **the Milinda, pañha**, Nāgasena tells king Milinda that “Maharajah, there is no way that one could stop

<sup>205</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi remarks here in his notes that although Comy glosses *kappa* as *āyu, kappa*, meaning the full human life span of 120 years (SA 2:235; S:B 822 n387), there seems to be no textual basis for taking *kappa* in this passage as meaning anything other than a cosmic aeon, the full extent of time required for a world system to evolve and dissolve.



a lifespan that is ending” (*n’atthi mahārāja khīṇ’āyukassa thitiyā kiriyā vā upakkamo vā*, Miln 151), which clearly refers to impending death.

In the Dilemma discussing the Buddha’s own lifespan, Nāgasena, says that “solitary meditation protects one while one is meditating in solitude; it increases the lifespan...” (*paṭisallānam paṭisallīyamānam attānam rakkhati, āyūṃ vaddheti*,... Miln 139). Curiously, Nāgasena says that *kappāvasesa* (variously translated as “more than the lifespan” or “what remains of a kalpa”) refers to the three months leading to the Buddha’s passing, that is, when he willfully overcomes his serious illness and extends his life until the end of the rains residence [§§2.23-24].

**The Kathā,vatthu** (Kvu 456-458) discusses the controverted point “that by psychic power one could live on for a world period” (*iddhi,bālena samannāgato kappam tiṭṭheyyā ti*) against the Mahāsaṅghika. It argues that if one says that such a one could remain for a world-period, then why not say that “one might live on for two, three, four world-periods?” The text also questions what it means to live on for a world-period. The Mahāsaṅghika, committed to the view that lifespan is the result of karma, cannot answer the question whether one’s extended lifespan is the result of psychic power. Could one, through psychic power, live on even if one is dead? Could one use psychic power to make permanent any of the five aggregates?<sup>206</sup> Could one with psychic power prevent his rebirth, or aging, or disease, or dying? As a final argument, the Kathā,vatthu quotes **the Pāṭibhoga Sutta**.<sup>207</sup>

Bhikshus, no recluse, nor brahmin, nor deva, nor Māra, nor Brahmā, nor anyone else in the world, can give a guarantee (*paṭibhoga*) against four things.

What are the four?

That what is liable to decay should not decay.

That what is liable to fall ill would not fall ill.

That what is liable to die would not die.

That no fruit should arise from one’s own evil deeds that are defiling, productive of rebirth, fearful, bringing painful results, leading to future birth, decay and death.

Bhikshus, no recluse, nor brahmin, nor deva, nor Māra, nor Brahmā, nor anyone else in the world, can give a guarantee (*paṭibhoga*) against these four things. (A 4.182/2:172)

As such, concludes the Kathā,vatthu, “it is not right to say that one with psychic power might live on for a world-period” (Kvu 16.6/457). However, it should be noted here that the controversy centres around “psychic power” (*iddhi,bala*) and not “the bases of spiritual power” (*iddhi,pāda*).<sup>208</sup> It is important to note that although the *iddhi,pādā* lead to the attainment of various psychic powers (*iddhi*),<sup>209</sup> it is the mental cultivation or meditation aspects that are directly related to the extension of lifespan, and not the psychic power in themselves.

**9c.2 Kappa as “world-cycle.”** From these canonical evidences, we can safely say that *kappa* in connection with the Buddha’s life can only mean *āyu,kappa*. However, curiously, Bhikkhu Bodhi, in his translation of **the Cetiya Sutta** (S 51.10/5:529), favours taking the term as *bhadda,kappa* [fortunate world cycle], that is, a “cosmic aeon.” After mentioning that the Saṃyutta Commentary takes *kappa* here as *āyu,kappa*, Bodhi goes on to say:

Nevertheless, nowhere else in the Nikāyas is *kappa* used in the sense of a normal human life span, and there seems to be no valid reason to ascribe *kappa* here a different meaning from the usual one, ie, a cosmic aeon. Whether the present passage is genuine or an interpolation, and whether

<sup>206</sup> The 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*) are form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*), the constituents of one’s being. They are all impermanent.

<sup>207</sup> Expanded in **Thāna S** (A 5.48/3:54) where these points are called “unattainables” (*alabbhanīyāni*).

<sup>208</sup> For a useful discussion, see Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:94-97. An Yang-Gyu, in his paper, “Buddhaghosa’s view of the Buddha’s lifespan” (2000), mentions only *iddhi* (psychic power) (eg 2000:137) without distinguishing it from *iddhi,pāda* (the bases of spiritual power). For a full study on *iddhi*, see Pm 205-214. See also S:B 1940 n246 & An Yang-Gyu 2000:136-142.

<sup>209</sup> On the def of *iddhi*, see (9b)2 above.



meditative success can confer such extraordinary powers, are different questions about which conflicting opinions have been voiced. (S:B 1940 n249)

Similarly, another eminent early Buddhism scholar, Rupert Gethin, in his *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* (2001), has argued in agreement with Bhikkhu Bodhi:

I think on balance the text of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* as we have it, in its various recensions,<sup>210</sup> points towards *mahā-kappa* as being the correct interpretation. A significant factor here is the word *kappāvasesa*. The most likely meaning of this is surely “the remainder of a kappa.”<sup>211</sup> For someone to say that he can live on “for his lifespan or the remainder of his lifespan” seems not to make very good sense; “remainder of his lifespan” in fact becomes redundant. However if one is thinking of an incalculable aeon [*asaṅkheyya,kappa*], and envisaging someone speaking as some point during that aeon, for him to say that he might live “for an aeon or [at least] the remainder of the aeon” makes rather better sense. Accordingly, in order to give *kappa* the value he thinks it ought to have, Buddhaghosa must ignore the more natural way of taking *kappāvasesa*. So, he says, *kappāvasesa* does not mean “the remainder of a *kappa*,” it means “a little bit more than a *kappa*,” that is, more than a man’s normal life-span of a hundred years.<sup>212</sup> (Gethin 2001:96)

Either way—taking *kappa* as a world-cycle or as an incalculable cycle, or taking it as a lifespan—it might be safely said that the Buddha’s lifespan controversy is a late tradition interpolated into the Mahā Parinibbāna, like the controversy over the Buddha’s allowance for the abrogation of the lesser and minor rules [11], “either out of choice or under pressure from within and without” (Dhirasekera 1981:170).

However, a serious doctrine or theological problem arises if we take *kappa* in this context to mean a “world-cycle” or “incalculable cycle.” It easily gives support to the docetic view of the Buddha, which is clearly foreign to early Buddhism. **Docetism** [9h] is the view that the Buddha is an eternal being (or at least one who lives for a world-cycle or an incalculable cycle) and who appears on earth in as a phantom being performing phantom acts to save beings.

Despite the sometimes mythical and otherworldly air of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta—and good scholarship—to render *kappa* as *mahā,kappa* (great cycle)<sup>213</sup> or *asaṅkheyya,kappa* (incalculable cycle), it stands out incongruously like a sore thumb against the grain of early Buddhism, or as the Kathā,vatthu argues, one might as well say that “he could live on though dead, he could live on although when his time is up!” (*mato tiṭṭheyya, kalaṅkato tiṭṭheyya*, Kvu 456). Forced with a choice between good scholarship and good sense, when the two are disparate, or forced with a choice between the letter or the spirit, I think it is better to choose good sense. Moreover, we have spirit of early Buddhism on our side.

**(9d) DID THE BUDDHA DIE ON VESAK DAY?** There is a problem of dates in the Buddha’s life, but before discussing this, let us look at the ancient Indian year. The Pali names of the ancient **Indian calendar** follow Vism 621 and its *Ṭīkā* (based on Ñāṇamoli’s *A Pali-English Glossary of Buddhist Technical Terms*, 1994), with the Sanskrit names and number of days added.<sup>214</sup>

<sup>210</sup> Cf Bareaux, *Recherches*, 1970-71 2:152. See §5 in this Intro.

<sup>211</sup> Gethin’s n: “See CPD sv *kappāvasesa*; Monier-Williams, sv *avaśeṣa*. I fail to see that Edgerton (BHSD sv *kappāvasesa*) has shown that *kappāvasesa* probably means ‘more than a *kappa*’ as Jaini suggests (BSOAS 21 (1958), p547)” (2001:96 n62).

<sup>212</sup> Gethin’s n: “[MA] 2:555: *kappāvasesam vā ti appam vā bhiiyo ti vutta-vassa-satato atirekam vā*. See also [SA] 3:251; DA 4:149; UA 322; DAṬ (Be 1961) 3:252. KR Norman has suggested to me that what **Buddhaghosa** may be doing is taking *kappāvasesa* as a *bahuvrīhi* in the sense of ‘[a period of time] having a lifespan as remainder’ (cf adjectival usage of *ardha-śeṣa* and *ardhāvaśeṣa*, qv Monier-Williams)” (2001:96 n63; slightly revised).

<sup>213</sup> “**Great Cycle,**” *mahā,kappa* (great aeon), sometimes simply *kappa*, ie, one full cycle or age of the world (V 3:109; D 1:14; 3:109; S 2:185 = It 17; A 2:126, 142; Miln 108, 232; DA 1:162; PvA 21), described as comprising of four stages—expanding, stable, contracting, stable—of a pulsating universe (A 2:142). For similes on the aeon’s length, see S 2:181; DA 1:164 = PvA 254.

<sup>214</sup> For the Indian year, see **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118.3/3:79) n on Uposatha = SD 7.13. On the monsoons, see **Vāsi,jaṭa S** (S 22.101.20/3:155) n on “the cold season” = SD 15.2a.

| Season                    | Sub-season          | Month: Pali | Sanskrit                       | Days | Equivalent |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|------|------------|
| <b>Hemanta</b><br>(cold)  | Hemanta<br>(winter) | Māga,sira   | Mārga,śīrśa                    | 30   | Nov-Dec    |
|                           | Sisira<br>(cool)    | Phussa      | Puṣya or Pauṣa                 | 30   | Dec-Jan    |
|                           | Vasanta<br>(spring) | Māgha       | Maghā                          | 30   | Jan-Feb    |
| <b>Gimhāna</b><br>(heat)  | Vasanta<br>(spring) | Phaggunā    | Phālguna or Phaggu             | 30   | Feb-Mar    |
|                           | Gimha<br>(summer)   | Citta       | Caitra                         | 30   | Mar-Apr    |
|                           | Vassanā<br>(rains)  | Vesākha     | Vaiśākha                       | 31   | Apr-May    |
| <b>Vassāna</b><br>(rains) | Gimha<br>(summer)   | Jetṭha      | Jyaiṣṭha                       |      | 31 May-Jun |
|                           | Vassanā<br>(rains)  | Āsālha      | Āṣāḍha                         | 31   | Jun-Jul    |
|                           | Sārada<br>(autumn)  | Sāvana      | Śrāvaṇa                        | 31   | Jul-Aug    |
|                           |                     | Poṭṭha,pāda | Proṣṭha,pada<br>or Bhādra,pada | 31   | Aug-Sep    |
|                           |                     | Assa,yuja   | Āśva,yuja                      | 30   | Sep-Oct    |
|                           |                     | Kattika     | Kārttika                       | 30   | Oct-Nov    |

[Note: The Indian month begins on the first day of the waning moon and ends on the full moon.]

In the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, the Buddha is recorded to have fallen severely ill on the point of death during the rains residence at the hamlet of Beluva [Beluva,gāmaka]:

Now when the Blessed One had entered the rains retreat, a serious illness arose in him, with severe pains, as if he were about to die. But he endured all this mindfully and fully aware, and without complaining.

Then it occurred to the Blessed One,

“It is not fitting that I should attain parinirvana without addressing my supporters and taking leave of the order of bhikkhus. I must make an effort to ward off this illness and dwell, having determined the life-force.”<sup>215</sup> (D 16.2.23/2:99)

It appears that Nāgasena (Miln 141) and the Sarvāstivādins take this episode to mean that the Buddha is actually at the point of dying, and so by sheer will power extends his life for *at least* 3 more months (to the end of the rains retreat). Note that no duration is mentioned in the above quotation.

Knowing that it is inappropriate for him to pass away without addressing the order, he consciously extends his lifespan. He would only be able to address the assembled order during **the Pavāraṇā**, marking the end of the rains residence, which would be in the month of Kattikā (October-November).<sup>216</sup>

Then the Blessed One said this to Māra the evil one:

“Worry not, evil one, it will not be long before the Tathāgata’s parinirvana.

At the end of [or with the passing of]<sup>217</sup> three months from now, the Tathāgata shall enter parinirvana.”<sup>218</sup> (D 16.3.9/2:106)

<sup>215</sup> *Atha kho Bhagavato etad ahoṣi: Na kho me taṃ paṭirūpaṃ yo ’haṃ anāmantetvā upaṭṭhāke anapaloketvā bhikkhu,saṅghaṃ parinibbāyeyyaṃ. Yan nunā ’haṃ imaṃ ābādhaṃ viriyena paṭippanāmetvā jīvita,saṅkhāraṃ adhiṭṭhāya vihareyyaṃ ti* (D 2:119; S 5:262; U 64). Comys however say that the Buddha did not let go of his life-formation like a ball of clay from his hand, but for exactly 3 months he entered upon the attainment of the fruits (*phala,samāpatti*), thinking, “I will not enter upon them for any longer than that” (DA 556; SA 3:253; UA 327). It should be noted, however, that this life-extension is different from the one at the Cāpāla Shrine [§3.3].

<sup>216</sup> Strangely, there is no record of this event in our Sutta.

<sup>217</sup> “At the end of [or with the passing of],” *accayena* (D 2:106 = S 5:262 = U 64 ≠ Kaccv 277; Moggv 2:26). The word can be rendered either way: (1) at the end of three months; (2) after three months. Could the Buddha be pulling

If it is assumed that the Buddha had extended his life by three months, from his declaration to Māra [§3.9], then, his life-extension act was done at the very beginning of the rains residence. This would mean that the Buddha passed away in Kattikā (October-November). The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta does not give us any hint of when the appearance of Māra occurred or when the Buddha told Ānanda that he would pass away in three months' time [§3.37] but if we can assume that the latest date for the Buddha's parinirvana would be three months after the Pavāraṇā, then the Buddha's parinirvana would be during the month of Māgha (January-February). Either way, the Buddha could not have passed away during Vesākha (which is six months after the Pavāraṇā).

Buddhaghosa, probably aware of the discrepancy of dates, assigns this episode to the 10<sup>th</sup> lunar month before the Buddha's parinirvana (DA 2:547 = SA 3:202). The Saṃyutta Poraṇa Tīkā says that the Buddha went into "fruition attainment (*phala, samāpatti*) [Vism 23], by which life is vitalized, sustained, prolonged... He entered the attainment with the determination, 'Let the pain not arise for another ten months,' and the pain, suppressed by the attainment, did not arise for another ten months."<sup>219</sup> If we accept Buddhaghosa's intercalary 10 months, then the Parinirvana would be on Vesak Day (full moon of April-May). The **Sarvāstivāda**, however, as recorded by Xuanzang, maintains the Buddha's parinirvana as falling on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight (ie the second half) of Kattikā (October-November),<sup>220</sup> which would be in keeping with the chronology of the sutta.

**(9e) WAITING FOR SUPRIYA & SUBHADRA (SANSKRIT ACCOUNTS).** The Sanskrit **Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra**<sup>221</sup> adds an interesting detail. Before the Buddha relinquishes his life-formation (*āyuh, saṃskāra*), he thinks of two persons, namely, Supriya, the king of the Gandharvas,<sup>222</sup> and Subhadra the wanderer, who could be taught by the Buddha himself, gaining spiritual maturity within three months. With this thought, the Buddha goes into the samadhi "by which mastered the forces of *jīvita* (new prolonged life) and rejected the forces of *āyuh* (the existing life force)" (Jaini 2001:192).<sup>223</sup>

On this basis, the Sarvāstivādins hold that the three months were indeed an extension of life. There was no need to prolong it further because the two converts would have become his disciples by then. Furthermore, the Buddha did this to show his control over the forces of life and death.<sup>224</sup>

While the Pali tradition is silent regarding how the Buddha's extension of life is accomplished, this matter is fully discussed in the Sarvāstivāda. Vasubandhu, in his **Abhidharma,kośa,bhāṣya**, gives several Vaibhāṣika views on it.<sup>225</sup> According to the Vibhāṣā Śāstra, there are two kinds of karma: the *āyur,vipāka,-karma*, which at the moment on conception determines the lifespan (*āyuh*), and the *bhoga,vipāka,karma*,

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Māra's legs here, and lived an extra 6 months to pass away the following Vesākha full moon—in which, however, it would appear that the Buddha had extended his life further than 3 months.

<sup>218</sup> *Apposukko tvam pāpima hohi, na ciram Tathāgatassa parinibbānam bhavissati, ito tiṇṇam māsānam accayena Tathāgato parinibbāyissatī ti.*

<sup>219</sup> Qu at S:B 1920 n138. BDict: **phala**, as "path-result" or "fruition," denotes those moments of supermundane consciousness which flash forth immediately after the moment of path-consciousness and which, till the attainment of the next higher path, may during the practice of insight (*vipassanā*) still recur innumerable times. If thus repeated, they are called the "attainment of fruition" (*phala, samāpatti*). There are two kinds of **phala, samāpatti**: (1) temporary attainment (*khaṇika, samāpatti*), and (2) attainment in the form of great insight (*mahā vipassanā*). The temporary attainment suppresses pain while one remains in the attainment. As soon as one emerges from the attainment, the pain permeates the body again. The attainment in the form of great insight, however, suppresses pain very well. After emerging from that state, pain rearises only after a long time. Buddhaghosa says that the Buddha has attained the temporary attainment before, but this is the first time that his attainment is in the form of great insight (DA 2:547). See above Intro (9b).

<sup>220</sup> Xuanzang [Hsuan-tsang], *Si-yu-ki [Xiyuji]: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, tr S Beal, London, 1884:33.

<sup>221</sup> Ed E Waldschmidt 1950-51.

<sup>222</sup> Not mentioned in the Pali accounts.

<sup>223</sup> *Yannv aham tadrūpān ṛddhyabhisamkāraṇ abhisamkuryām yathā samāhite citte jīvita-samkāraṇ adhiṣṭhā-yāyuh-samkāraṇ utsrjeyam* (Mahā Parinirvāṇa S 210; also Divy 203); see Jaini 2001:198 n10.

<sup>224</sup> *Marāṇa, vaśītvā, jñāpanārtham... traimāsyam eva nordhvaṃ vineyakāryābhāvāt....* (Yaśomitra, *Abhidharma, kośa, vyākhyā* 105). Qu by Jaini 2001:198 n11.

<sup>225</sup> Lous de la Vallée Poussin (tr), *L'Abhidharma-kośa de Vasubandhu*, ch II, kā 10.

that is the aggregate of all past karma, accumulated in the consciousness, continuously yielding its fruits (other than the life-span) during one existence.

A human arhat, having mastered the bases of spiritual power (*ṛddhi, pādā*), can through his resolution, transform the *bhoga, vipāka, karma* into an *āyur, vipāka, karma*. The transformed karma then produces the extended lifespan. And if he wishes to reject his established life-span (*āyuh, saṃskāra*), he does the reverse, by transforming his *āyur, vipāka, karma* into the *bhoga, vipāka, karma*. There is, of course, a problem here in the case of an arhat for whom all new births have ended (no new potential *āyur, vipāka, karma*). Vasubandhu, after listing all such views, concludes with his own view that an arhat could extend or relinquish his lifespan solely through the power of meditation, not of karma.<sup>226</sup>

**(9f) DID THE BUDDHA COMMIT SUICIDE?** In chapter 3 of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta [§3.10], it is said:

Then the Blessed One, at the Cāpāla Shrine, mindfully and fully aware, relinquished his life-formation.<sup>227</sup> ...

The sage let go of the formation of existence, of life [the remaining lifespan], low and high, Delighting within and mentally concentrated, he broke the armour-like self-existence.<sup>228</sup>

(D 16.3.10/2:106 f)

Could we regard the Buddha's relinquishment of his life-span as suicide? Then there is the "problem" of the Buddha's last meal offered by Cunda the smith. The Buddha knows that the food is contaminated or unsuitable for human consumption:

...the Blessed One addressed Cunda the smith:

"Cunda, serve me the *sūkara, maddava*<sup>229</sup> that has been prepared, but serve the order of monks with the other hard and soft foods that have been prepared."<sup>230</sup>

"Yes, bhante," Cunda the smith replied in assent to the Blessed One, and he served the Buddha the *sūkara, maddava* that has been prepared, but served the order of monks with the other hard and soft foods that have been prepared.

Then the Blessed One addressed Cunda the smith:

"Cunda, as for the rest of the *sūkara, maddava*, bury it in a pit. Cunda, I can see no one in the world with its devas, Māras and Brahmās, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and people who, if they were to eat it, could thoroughly digest it except the Tathāgata."<sup>231</sup>

"Yes, bhante," Cunda the smith replied in assent to the Blessed One, and then buried the rest of the *sūkara, maddava* in a pit. (D 16.4.18-19/D 2:127)

Yet the Buddha knowingly consumes the contaminated food offering.

A Buddha (that is, any fully self-awakened being) has the power to live for a whole lifespan (*kappa*, Skt *kalpa*) of his time or a little more (say up to 160 years),<sup>232</sup> but no Buddha does so because the term is shortened by reason of climate and the food he takes (DA 2:413). In the **Mahāpadāna Sutta** (D 14), the Buddha declares,

My own lifespan now, bhikshus, is trifling and short, quick to pass. One who lives long (here) lives only for more or less a hundred years" (*mayham bhikkhave etarahi appakam āyu-p, pamāṇam parittam lahusam, yo ciram jīvati so vassa, satam appam vā bhiyyo*). (D 14.7/2:4)

<sup>226</sup> For details of this discussion, see Jaini 2001:193-197.

<sup>227</sup> See §3.10n below. See S:B 819 n366.

<sup>228</sup> See §3.10n below.

<sup>229</sup> *Sūkara, maddava*, see Intro (13b).

<sup>230</sup> See n by John Strong (2001:171) in §4.18n below.

<sup>231</sup> Cf Lamotte 1976:313 f.

<sup>232</sup> The elder **Bakkula** is said to have lived to 160 years (M 124.3/3:125; MA 4:191). If **Yasa Kakaṇḍaka, putta** of the Second Buddhist Council (VA 1:33 ff; Dīpv 4:45 ff; Mahv 4:9 ff) is the same as Yasa "the son of family" (V 1:16 f), converted during the first year of the Ministry, then he would be over 165 years.

The phrase “more or less a hundred years” (*vassa,satam appam vā bhiyyo*) is stock.<sup>233</sup> However, because the Buddha has mastery of the four bases of spiritual power,<sup>234</sup> he can if he wishes live a little beyond the normal lifespan (*kappāvasesa*)<sup>235</sup> [§3.3]. No Buddha, however, dies before his dispensation is firmly established [§3.8].

The Commentary to **the Dhanu-g,gaha Sutta**,<sup>236</sup> which says that the life-formation (*āyu,sankhāra*) runs faster than the speed at which as man could catch a flying arrow, explains that *āyu,sankhāra* refers to the physical life-faculty (*rūpa,jīvit'indriya*). This is what that is given up by the Blessed One.

Since the Buddha has awakened to the unconditioned (*asankhata*), that is, nirvana, he cannot be defined in conditional or relative terms, that is to say, these four logical values (Skt *catuskoṭi*) do not apply to him: *that the Buddha exists, that the Buddha does not exist, that the Buddha both exists and does not exist, and that the Buddha neither exist nor not exist.*<sup>237</sup>

On a more mundane level, we can assert that the Buddha places a high value of life, as clearly evident from the first of the five precepts (against taking of life) (D 3:235; A 3:203, 275; Vbh 285). In fact, while at Beluva (D 2:99), he falls seriously ill, on the point of death, and his thought is that of getting well:

Now when the Blessed One has entered the rains retreat, a serious illness arose in him, with severe pains, as if he were about to die. But he endured all this mindfully and fully aware, and without complaining.

Then it occurred to the Blessed One,

“It is not fitting that I should attain parinirvana without addressing my supporters and taking leave of the order of monks. I must make an effort to ward off this illness and dwell, having determined the life-force.”  
(D 16.2.23/2:99)

It appears that Nāgasena (Miln 141) and the Sarvāstivādins take this episode to mean that the Buddha is actually at the point of dying, and by sheer will power extends his life for *at least* 3 more months (to the end of the rains retreat). Note that no duration is mentioned here.<sup>238</sup>

The Commentaries however say that the Buddha did not let go of his life-formation like a ball of clay from his hand, but for exactly 3 months he entered upon the attainment of the fruits (*phala,samāpatti*), thinking, “I will not enter upon them for any longer than that” (DA 556; SA 3:253; UA 327).<sup>239</sup>

Just as the unawakened is “dead” to awakening, even so the awakened is “dead” due to his being unawakened. The awakened and the unawakened are worlds apart. While the unawakened habitually fall back into a cycle of deaths, the awakened are beyond death. As such, it is meaningless to speak of an awakened one committing suicide since he is already “dead” to the world.<sup>240</sup> For upon awakening, the Buddha and the arhats, transcend life and death as we know them. In **the Anurādha Sutta** (S 22.86), the Buddha declares to Anurādha:

But, Anurādha, when the Tathāgata is **neither truly nor actually [reliably] to be found here and now**,<sup>241</sup> is it fitting for you to declare: “Avusos, when a Tathāgata is describing a Tathāgata—

<sup>233</sup> D 14.7/ 2:4 = S 4.9/1:108 = 15.20/2:192; qu at DA 2:413.

<sup>234</sup> See §3.3n.

<sup>235</sup> See §3.3 below & S 51.10/5:259.

<sup>236</sup> S 20.6/2:265 f.

<sup>237</sup> KN Jayatilleke, in his classic work, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963), says: “Until recently it was believed in the Western world that Aristotelian logic was the only logic and that it reflected the structure of reality but, with the discovery of many-valued logics by [J] Lucasiewicz and [N] Lobachevsky, this view is no longer universally held. This means that our choice of a logical system is to some extent arbitrary and dependent on the needs and nature of our discussion”(1963:350).

<sup>238</sup> But see §3.9.

<sup>239</sup> For a different opinion, see Jaini 1958 (2001:193). It should be noted, however, that this life-extension is different from the one at the Cāpāla Shrine [§3.3].

<sup>240</sup> See John Strong’s interesting remark on the arhat has both living and dead, 1992:86-90 & “Was Channa an arhat when he killed himself?” **Chann’ovāda S** (M 114) = SD 11.12 (5).

<sup>241</sup> *Ettha ca te Anurādha diṭṭhe va dhamme saccato thetato tathāgato anupalabhiyamano*. Essentially, this statement means that the Buddha is beyond predication: he cannot really be defined in worldly terms. In Buddhist terms,



the highest person, the supreme person, who has attained the highest—he describes him apart from these four cases:

- ‘The Tathāgata exists after death,’
- ‘The Tathāgata does not exist after death,’
- ‘The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death,’
- ‘The Tathāgata neither exists nor not exist after death.’?’
- “No, bhante.”

“Excellent, excellent, Anurādha! As before, Anurādha, so too now, I declare only suffering and the end of suffering.”<sup>242</sup> (S 22.86/3:118 f) = SD 21.13

In the **Anurādha Sutta** (S 22.86), the Buddha declares to Anurādha that “when the Tathagata is not being apprehended by you as true and real here in this very life,”<sup>243</sup> it is not fitting for anyone to describe the Tathagata in terms of the states of truth: as existing, as not existing, as both, or as neither.<sup>244</sup>

There is an ancient Indian religious tradition of *mahā,samādhi* or “final samadhi,” where the saint would voluntarily pass away in deep meditation.<sup>245</sup> It is possible that the tradition started with the Buddha, or it could have been practised even before his time. Although this is not, strictly speaking, a Buddhist practice, such a death as the Buddha would earn his great respect and holiness. This is because he is able to predict or foresee his death. Apparently, such predictions of impending death by a saint was (and is) not uncommon in India. [13b(5)]

**(9g) IS THE BUDDHA STILL LIVING?** Amongst many latter-day Buddhists, there is the belief that the Buddha (or Buddhas) could still be contacted, and that he (or they) is/are still teaching out of his great compassion—a notion that some scholars have asserted as being

...particularly significant in the origins of some of the Mahāyāna literature.... One, and perhaps one of the few defining dimensions of Mahāyāna Buddhism is a vision and understanding of the Buddha as *not really dead but still around*. When stated and accepted this understanding entailed that Buddhism itself had the potential to change in the light of a continuing revelation.

(Paul Williams 2000:108-111; original italics)

Williams goes on to show that the practice of “the recollection of the Buddha” (*buddhānu,ssati*, Skt *buddhānumṣṛti*) is found in early Buddhism. He cites the case of **Piṅgiya**, who says that his old age prevents him from visiting the Buddha, but through his devotion and “with constant vigilance, it is possible for me to see him with my mind as clearly as with my eyes, night or day” (Sn 1144).<sup>246</sup> In the **Visuddhi-magga**, Buddhaghosa describes the recollection of the Buddha in detail.<sup>247</sup> The recollection of the Buddha often involves “visualising the Buddha,” which sometimes leads to visions of the Buddha. Such a practice is apparently popular from an early time, and one of its results is that the meditator feels as if he is in the presence of the Buddha himself (Harrison 1978; Williams 1989:30, 217-220).

What we have here [the Pratyupanna Sūtra] is in all probability a justification in advance (if not also retrospectively) for the sudden appearance of Mahāyāna sūtras, ie “dharma hitherto un-

karmic constructions (karma and fruition) do not apply to the Buddha. Bhikkhu Bodhi renders this crucial sentence as: “But, Anurādha, when the Tathāgata is not apprehended by you as real and actual here and in this very life,....” See S:B 1080 n165. On *staccato thetato* (D 1:4; M 1:8, 179, 2:109; S 3:112, 118, 4:384), see Harvey 1983: 45 & 52 n18.

<sup>242</sup> *Pubbe cāhaṃ Anurādha etarahi ca dukkhañ c’eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhan’ti.*

<sup>243</sup> Be Ce Ke Se: *Diṭṭh’eva dhamme saccato tathato tathāgato anupalabbhiyamāne*; Ee *Diṭṭh’eva dhamme saccato thetato tathāgato anupalabbhiyamāno*. Cf **Alaggadūpama S** (M 22): “And bhikkhus, since in truth and in fact, one can find neither self nor what belongs to a self” (*attani ca bhikkhave attaniye ca saccato thetato anupalabbhamāne*, M 22.25/1:138,5-6 = SD 3.13) & “one thus gone, I say, is untraceable even here and now” (*diṭṭh’evāhaṃ bhikkhave dhamme tathāgatam ananuvejjo ti vadāmi*, M 22.36/1:140,6-7).

<sup>244</sup> S 22.86/3:118 f = SD 22.13. See also **The person in Buddhism** = SD 29.6b (8.1).

<sup>245</sup> See eg Sushila Blackman 1997.

<sup>246</sup> Williams 2000:217.

<sup>247</sup> Vism 7.2-67/198-213.

heard.” However, it is by no means to be regarded as necessarily a cynical attempt to confer a specious authenticity on the literary confections of followers of the Mahāyāna. It involves rather the proposition that meditation is a legitimate means whereby the eternal Buddha-principle may continue to reveal religious truths to those fit to receive them, and thus throws an interesting light on the composition of Mahāyāna sūtras in general. It is no doubt in this sense, that of a channel of inspiration and revelation, that the author of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* advocated the inclusion of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* amongst the religious practices of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

(Paul Harrison 1978:54)

It seems certain that a text like the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra* (and perhaps other early Mahāyāna texts associated with Pure Lands and *buddhānusr̥ti*) describes practices which can lead to revelatory visions, and the *Pratyutpanna Sūtra* itself advocates the promulgation of the teachings thus received. . . . Indeed the Buddhist tradition in general has tended to be very cautious, even dismissive, concerning visions seen in meditation. . . . But certainly some people took these revelations seriously, and those who took them seriously were sometimes great scholars. It is often said that the standard view of early Buddhism is that after the death of a Buddha he is beyond reference or recall, significantly and religiously dead. From such a perspective the idea of seeing a living Buddha in meditation is problematic. One way round this would be to claim that the Buddha visualized is simply a Buddha who has for one reason or another not yet died.

(Paul Williams 2000:109 f)

Scholars like **Gregory Schopen** have argued, on archaeological and ethnographical grounds, that the canonical texts do not always (more often do not) reflect the actual common practice amongst both the lay and the ordained in ancient and mediaeval India.<sup>248</sup> Schopen, for example, has argued that the Buddha’s relics preserved, after his passing, in stupas, were felt to be the Buddha himself. The Buddha was believed to be present in his relics and even in places associated with his life (Schopen 1987a, 1990, 1994). His ideas are not new, for decades before, André Bareau has said that even “before the beginning of our era . . . the *stūpa* is more than the symbol of the Buddha, it is the Buddha himself” (*La construction*, 1960: 269).<sup>249</sup> Through his relics, the Buddha was also treated as if in some sense present in the monastery, and was treated by the monastery and apparently by the community as a “legal person” with inalienable property rights.

Schopen further notes that the relics are “infused with morality, infused with concentration, wisdom, release and knowledge and vision” (1994:47). These are qualities (*dhamma*) often also referred to as “the body of dharmas” (*dhamma,kāya*; Skt *dharma,kāya*) in certain Buddhist philosophical texts (Paul Williams 1989:171).

Thus texts that say that one should take refuge not in the physical body of the Buddha but in his *dharmakāya*, his Buddha-qualities could be said to be indicating not just the need to become a Buddha through expressing in oneself those qualities constitutive of a Buddha (as previously thought). They could be indicating also the continuing presence of the Buddha, even though dead, his presence as the *dharmakāya* pervading his relics. Transcending death, the Buddha is present in the monastery still.

(Paul Williams 2000:258 n16)

The desire to meet the Buddha is still common today, especially amongst the followers of the “Pure Land” or Amitābha tradition. If one is unable to see the Buddha in this life in meditation, then one could after death be reborn in his presence in the Pure Land where he still dwells. The earliest Pure Lands are modelled on the heavens. Pure Land devotees believe, through recollecting the Buddha or even by merely reciting his name (*Namaḥ Amitābhāya*), they would be reborn in his Pure Land, Sukhāvātī.<sup>250</sup>

There is always the possibility, even likelihood, in the past and even today, that certain monks, inspired by their visions in the practice of *buddhānussati* (Skt *buddhānusr̥ti*), regard them as genuine and that

<sup>248</sup> See esp his anthology, Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, 1997.

<sup>249</sup> Cf Schopen, “What’s in a name,” 1996:70 f.

<sup>250</sup> See **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17) & SD 36.12 (5); also Paul Williams 2000:110 f, 175, 181-185.

new truths or new teachings have been revealed to them. Such visions are often associated by the faithful (especially the laity) with magical power. Paul Harrison writes that the meditation and associated powers would have given Mahāyānists an edge in the crucial factor amongst the religious in ancient India—competition for scarce resources. Essentially, this is a competition for donations from supporting non-religious lay believers eager for religious merit and quick answers to personal prayers, and even access to magical power and miraculous results (Harrison 1995:66).

On the other hand, Harrison argues, the Mahāyāna is “the work of a predominantly monastic order of meditators engaged in strenuous ascetic practices, people asserting, in short, that the Buddha is to be found in and through the realization of the Dharma, not in the worship of relics” (1995:62).

**(9h) IS THE BUDDHA REALLY DEAD?** It is clear that when the Buddha’s body has been cremated, his physical existence is no more. What about his mind. Is it possible that a part of his mind (*mano*) survives death? **Frank J Hoffman** asks, “What of the possibility that X may exist in part? In the context X is the Tathāgata and this view as applied to the Tathāgata may be understood as the view that part of the Tathāgata survives death and part does not” (1987:21). However, this view is clearly rejected by the Buddha as evident from **the Mahā Taṇha,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38) where Sāti is rebuked for holding that the Buddha teaches that “it is the same consciousness, not another, that runs and flows through samsara” (M 38.2-3/1:256 f).<sup>251</sup>

As such, the belief that the Buddha both exists and does not exist after death is clearly a mistaken one. Hoffman explains that what is meant by the deathless quality of nirvana when applied to Tathāgata is simply to “deny that the word *mata* (‘dead,’ opposite of *amata*) applies to the Tathāgata,” in the sense that it is impossible for him to experience death, since to experience something means that he be alive (1987: 114 f). K R Norman, however, puts it differently:

The epithets *amata*, *ajāta*, *ajara*, etc, when applied to *nibbāna*, mean “where there is no death, no birth, no old age,” as opposed to *samsāra*, where there is death, birth and old age. Someone who has gained *nibbāna* has left *samsāra* and is no longer subject to death, birth and old age. The Buddha, for the most part, describes *nibbāna* in the form of negatives: it is the opposite of *samsāra*. The Tathāgata cannot experience death in *nibbāna* because there is no death there, because there is no birth or old age there. (Norman 1991:7 = 1993:261 f)

Peter Harvey, in “The nature of the Tathāgata” (1983), makes a radical suggestion that the Buddha’s consciousness, although described as “unestablished” (*appatiṭṭhita*), “outlasts death.” He bases his argument on a simile in **the Atthi,rāgo Sutta** (S 12.64) where it is said that *in the absence of a wall, earth or water, the sunbeam falls nowhere*<sup>252</sup> (which Harvey presumably takes to mean that it remains in space undetected). Apparently, Harvey is himself not certain of the idea: he was exploring such the possibility without making present any definite thesis. In fact, he is quite cautious about his suggestion:

The death of a Tathāgata is simply the cessation of the dukkha-khandhas. No real satta or atta or “I am” us destroyed, as such things do not exist. Again, the Tathāgata is not destroyed and cut off, as the end of the khandhas is not his end, and does not make him “*na hoti*” [does not become]. On the other hand, it cannot be said that a Tathāgata “becomes (*hoti*)” after death, as this would mean that he arose in some form of rebirth or “becoming (*bhava*) [existence].” Again it cannot be said that he “becomes” in an attenuated fashion (or that part of him becomes and part is cut off).

Nevertheless, a Tathāgata does, in some atemporal sense, exist (*atthi*). This is because the **unsupported nibbanic viññāṇa**, which is his inner nature, or with which he is closely associated, still exists after death. Such a Tathāgata is one “aspect” of the dhamma “seen” at Stream-entry and “won” at enlightenment.

... This interpretation is not to be taken as implying that a Tathāgata is no different from a metaphysical atta [self or soul], as a Tathāgata lacks the essential aspect of I-ness crucial to an atta, and is not something that exists in a person prior to his enlightenment. Similarly, though my

<sup>251</sup> See Norman 1991:256 f, 261. See also SD 6.15 (2004).

<sup>252</sup> S 12.64/2:103 f.

interpretation puts stress on a certain form of viññāṇa, it is clearly different from a full-blown *Vijñānavāda* [sic], in which everything turns out to be *vijñāna*.

(Harvey 1983:50; cf 1995:24 f; emphasis and diacritics added)

This sunbeam simile of **the Atthi,rāgo Sutta** refers to the arhat's consciousness as being *appatiṭṭhita*, “unestablished,” that is, finds no support to rest on. Bhikkhu Bodhi clarifies the simile in this manner:

...I think it would be wrong to interpret the sutta as saying that after his parinibbāna the arahant's consciousness persists in some mode that can only be described as unestablished. The present passage [S 12.64.17-24/2:103 f] is clearly speaking of the arahant's consciousness *while he is still alive*. Its purport is not that an “unestablished consciousness” remains after the arahant's parinibbāna, but that his consciousness, being devoid of lust, does not “become established in” the four nutriments [edible food, sense-contact, mental volition, consciousness] in any way that might generate a future existence. (S:B 775 n174)

Harvey's explanation (1953: 50) is helpful here, provided we remember his caveat in the last paragraph of this excerpt. There is always the problem of language in trying to express the inexpressible. Just because a word exists does not mean that it refers to a real thing: one cannot define something into being. One could say “I believe in unicorns” but it does not mean that they exist. Or, one could say, “The house is not built yet.” Here “house” is clearly non-existent. Similarly, the word “consciousness” is used after the fact to describe a person's state *after* he is awakened, when what used to exist before (“consciousness”), ceases to be after he passes away.

Even Buddhaghosa sometimes stumbles (or we stumble over him) here where, in his Majjhima Commentary on the sentence “where consciousness is without attribute, without end, luminous” in **the Brahma,nimantanika Sutta** (M 49.25/1:329),

takes its subject to be *nibbāna*, called “consciousness” (*viññāṇam*), in the sense that “it can be cognized” (*vijānitabbam*). This derivation is hardly credible, since nowhere in the Nikāyas is Nibbāna described as consciousness, nor is it possible to derive an active noun from the gerundive. (Bodhi, M:NB 1249 n513)

The mentioned phrase also forms the first line of this stanza from **the Kevaḍḍha Sutta** (D 11):

<sup>253</sup>Where consciousness is without attribute,<sup>254</sup> without end, luminous<sup>255</sup>—  
There earth, water, fire, air find no footing.  
There long and short, small and great, fair and foul,  
Name and form are totally stopped.  
With the cessation of consciousness all this stop.<sup>256</sup> (D 11.85/1:223) = SD 1.7

<sup>253</sup> *Viññāṇam anidassanam anantaṃ sabbato pabham*: | *ettha āpo ca paṭhavī tejo vāyo ca na gādhati* | *ettha dīghañ ca rassañ ca anum thūlam subhāsubham* | *ettha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhati* | *Viññāṇassa nirodhena etth'etaṃ uparujjhati*. The first line occurs in **Brahma,nimantanika S** (M 49.25/1:329). See REA Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvana*, London, 1969:71 f.

<sup>254</sup> “Without attribute [signless],” *anidassana*, “invisible.” Nāṇananda renders it as “non-manifesting” (*Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971:59). See Bodhi's important n at M:NB 1249 n513.

<sup>255</sup> “Luminous,” *pabham*, v1 *paham*. In his Majjhima tr n, Nāṇamoli takes *pabham* to be the negative present participle of *pabhavati*—*apabham*—the negative-prefix *a* elided in conjunction with *sabbato*: “The sense can be paraphrased freely by ‘not predicating being in relation to “all,”’ or ‘not assuming of “all” that it is or is not in an absolute sense’” (M:NB 1249 n513). “But,” argues Bodhi. “if we take *pabham* as ‘luminous,’ which seems better justified, the [Majjhima] verse links up with the idea of the mind as being intrinsically luminous [A 1:10]” (id). See D:W 557 n241. Cf A 1.10 where the mind is said to be nature radiant (*pabhassara*) & A 2:139 where the light of wisdom (*paññā,pabha*) is called the best of lights. See Bodhi's important n at M:NB 1249 n513.

<sup>256</sup> The Buddha makes a similar statement by way of an Udāna (inspired utterance) on the Parinirvana of Bāhiya Dārucīriya: “Where water, earth, fire and air find no footing, | There neither brightness burns nor sun shines / There



Some useful understanding might come from a discussion of Harvey’s “unsupported nibbāna viññāna” (*appatiṭṭhitam viññānām*)<sup>257</sup> (1983:50) quoted above in the light of the Kevaddha Sutta stanza above. The verb *patiṭṭhati* usually means “‘to become established,’ that is, attached, principally on account of craving and other defilements” (S:B 342 n2). The arhat is said to pass away “with consciousness unestablished” (*appatiṭṭhitena viññānena...parinibbuto*, S 4.23/1:122), that is, without any kind of support for consciousness to occur. **The Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā** or Diamond Sutra is echoes this understanding:

Whosoever, Subhūti, were to say that the Tathāgata goes or comes, or stands<sup>258</sup> or sits, or lies down—he, Subhūti, does not understand what I have taught. And why is that? “The Tathāgata,” Subhūti, is one who had not gone anywhere or who has come from anywhere. Therefore, he is called “the Tathāgata, the arhat [worthy], the fully self-awakened one.”

(*Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, ed Edward Conze. Rome, 1974:59)

**The Aggi Vaccha,gotta Sutta** (M 72) has the famous fire simile by which the Buddha explains that when a fire is extinguished it goes nowhere: it is just that the conditions for a fire to occur are no more present (M 72.19/1:487).<sup>259</sup> Or, as the **Saññojana S 1** (S 12.53) puts it: when the nutriment or fuel (*āhāra*) is exhausted, the lamp will go out (S 12.53/2:86). The word *nibbuta* that describes one who has gained nirvana is also used of a fire that has gone out.<sup>260</sup>

In his article, “On the Problem of Nirvāṇa,” F Otto Shrader has noted the ancient Indian belief that “an expiring flame does not really go out, but returns into the primitive, pure, invisible state of fire it had before its appearance as visible fire” (1905-05:167).<sup>261</sup> In his paper on “Death and the Tathāgata,” Norman concludes:

So it is with an individual who has gained *nibbāna*. His state cannot be described any more that the state of a fire that has gone out can be described,<sup>262</sup> and the question about his future arising is met the statement that it is not appropriate to speak of him as arising or not arising, or as both, or as neither.<sup>263</sup> Nothing can be said about a tathāgata after death, because if whatever reason or basis there might be for a description of him as embodied, disembodied, etc, should cease com-

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neither moon gleams nor darkness reigns. | When a sage, a brahmin, through wisdom has known this by himself / Then he is freed from form and formless, from joy and pain.” (U 9). A similar verse is found at S 1.69/ 1:15, and a similar teaching is given by Mahā Cunda to Channa 4.87/4:59. On this verse (D 11.85) see D:W 557 n242 & SD 9 (Mahā Parinibbāna S), Intro (9h).

<sup>257</sup> S 3:53; *appatiṭṭhitena viññānena*, S 1:122.

<sup>258</sup> *Api tu khalu punaḥ Subhūte yaḥ kaścid eva vadet: Tathāgato gacchati vā āgacchati vā tiṣṭhati vā niṣidati vā śayyāṃ vā kalpayati, na me Subhūte sa bhāṣitasya artham ājanāti. Tat kasya hetoḥ? Tathāgata iti Subhūte ucyate na kvacid,gato na kutaścid āgataḥ. Tenōcyate Tathāgato rhan samyaksambuddha iti (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā, ed & tr Edward Conze. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1974:59).*

<sup>259</sup> See SD 6.14 (2004).

<sup>260</sup> As in *aggi anāhāro* (a fire without fuel), M 1:147; Sn 19; fig combined with *sīti,bhūta* (become cool), V 1:8; M 1:431; A 2:208 = D 3:233 = Pug 56, 61; A 4:410, 5:65; Sn 593, 707; Pv 1.8.7; *anupādāya nibbuta* (cool without any more fuel), S 2:279; A 1:162, 4:290 = Dh 414 = Sn 638.

<sup>261</sup> Shrader’s fn: *Vahner yathā yoni-gatasya mūrtir na drśyate n’aiva ca liṅga-nāsaḥ... = As a form of fire...is not seen nor its seed destroyed [Norman] (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.13); cf Miln 327 f (where is nirvana stored?). See also Norman 1991:262 f.*

<sup>262</sup> **Aggi Vaccha,gotta S** (M 72): *Sace pana taṃ Vaccha evaṃ puccheyya: yo te ayam purato aggo nibbuto co aggi ito katamaṃ disaṃ gato, puratthimaṃ vā pacchimaṃ vā uttaraṃ vā dakkhiṇaṃ vā, evaṃ puṭṭho tvaṃ Vaccha kinti vyākareyyāsi ti. Na upeti bho Gotamo* (M 1:487).

<sup>263</sup> **Aggi Vaccha,gotta S** (M 72): *Evaṃ,vimutta,citto pana bho Gotamo bhikkhu kuhiṃ upapajjati ti kho Vaccha na upeti...na upapajjati ti kho Vaccha na upeti...upapajjati ca na ca upapajjati ti kho Vaccha na upeti...n’eva upapajjati na na upapajjati ti kho Vaccha na upeti* (M 1:486).



pletely, how could he be described?<sup>264</sup> The Buddha was right to insist that the religious life does not depend on answers for such questions. (Norman 1991:8 =1993:262 f)

This teaching of conditionality and unconditionality, when clearly understood, frees one from the need of other ways of understanding the nature of the Buddha. The Mahāsaṅghika,<sup>265</sup> for example, held a docetic view of the Buddha (*lokottara, vāda*). **Docetism** is the wrong view that the Buddha does not have a real or natural body during his life on earth but only an apparent or phantom one. The Mahāsaṅghika Lokottara, vāda (“Supramundane School,” also called Eka, vyavahāra, “One-utterance School”),<sup>266</sup> a branch of the Mahāsaṅghika, taught that a Buddha in reality is endowed with a supermundane (*lokottara*) nature, omniscience, limitless power and eternal life. It also taught the docetic doctrine that any physical manifestation or actions on earth undertaken by a Buddha are merely appearances or illusory projections performed to save beings. Although not much of Mahāsaṅghika literature is extant (except for the Mahāvastu and their Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya), the ideas of this school seems to have influenced to development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, for example, the Trikāya doctrine.<sup>267</sup>

**(9i) IMMORTAL SAINTS.** Although the notion of immortality, or at least, the ability to live for a world-cycle (or beyond), is mentioned, in the Mahā Parinibbāna, in connection with the Buddha, many early saints were regarded to be still alive today, for example, awaiting the advent of the next Buddha, Metteyya (Skt Maitreya). An interesting case in point is the second most important monk after the Buddha, that is, Mahā Kassapa (Skt Mahā Kāśyapa). Although the Commentaries say that Mahā Kassapa was 120 years old at the time of the First Council,<sup>268</sup> Nyanaponika remarks that this chronology is hardly plausible, “for it would mean that he was forty years older than the Buddha and thus already an old man of at least 75 at their first meeting” (Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997:384 n17).

It is said that throughout his spiritual life he had not lain on a bed, that is, he slept in a sitting posture.<sup>269</sup> According to Mahāyāna sources (such as Xuanzang’s Xiyuji), it is said that Kāśyapa did not die. He still dwells in the **Kukkuṭa, pāda Giri** (Chicken’s Foot Mountain) deep in samadhi, awaiting the arrival of Maitreya Buddha.<sup>270</sup> A tooth of Mahā Kāśyapa’s, according to the Cūlavamsa, is enshrined in the Bhīma, tittha Vihāra in Sri Lanka (Cuv 85.81).

There is a Mahāyāna tradition that when the Buddha passed away, he entrusted the care of his teachings to a group of 16 great arhats and their disciples. The Buddha instructed these forest-dwelling (*āraṇya, vāsi*) saints to make themselves available as recipients of offerings so that the donors might gain religious merit (Skt *puṇya*). In compliance, these arhats have extended their lives indefinitely through magical powers (*ṛddhi*) and are still accessible for those in need.

This tradition is found in the Chinese translations of a number of Indian texts, notably **the Nandi, -mitrāvadāna**, translated by Xuanzang in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The 16 great arhats are Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, Kanaka, vatsa, Subinda, Nakula, Bhadra, Kālīka, Vajraputra, Śvapāka, Panthaka, Rāhula, Nāgasena, Inga-da, Vana, vāsi, Ajita and Cūla, panthaka (Dictionary of Buddhism, 2003:270). Such saints are believed in the Mahāyāna, especially amongst the more traditional believers, that such saint are immortal.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>264</sup> **Sabhiya Kaccāna S** (S 44.11): *Yo ca Vaccha hetu yo ca paccayo paññāpanāya rūpī ti vā arūpī ti vā saññī ti vā asaññī ti vā n’eva saññī nāsaññī ti vā, so ca hetu so paccayo sabbena sabbam sabbathā sabbam aparisesam niruj-jhetvā, kena nam paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya rūpī vā ti...nāsaññī ti vā* (S 4:402).

<sup>265</sup> That is, the majority school that broke away from the Sthaviras (Elders) after the Second Council (c100-110 AB) but probably before the Third Council (c350 BCE). See *Dictionary of Buddhism*: Mahāsaṅghika.

<sup>266</sup> On the Mahāsaṅghikas and the Lokottaravāda, see Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989:16-20. See also *Dictionary of Buddhism*: Lokottara-vāda.

<sup>267</sup> See Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 1988a:622-623-625 & Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1989:167-175. See *Dictionary of Buddhism*: trikāya. On the Buddha’s deification & immortality, see **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b.3 (3.3).

<sup>268</sup> VA 4-30 (tr NA Jayawickrama, *The Inception of Discipline*, 1962: 27); DA 2:413, 3:897; MA 4:114; SA 2:-130; AA 2:10.

<sup>269</sup> DA 2:413, 3:736; AA:SHB 2:396.

<sup>270</sup> Beal 1884 2:142 f.; Lamotte 1988:206.

<sup>271</sup> See **Arhats who became Bodhisattvas** = SD 27.6b.

## 10 Tools for preserving the Teaching

**(10a) CONDITIONS FOR NON-DECLINE.** R M L Gethin has discussed quite instructively on the six sets of teachings (both the *aparāhāniya,dhammā* and the *bodhi,pakkhiya.dhammā*) and the four great references in his *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* (2001:230-240).<sup>272</sup> The seven sets (*bodhi,pakkhiya,-dhammā*) are also discussed by AK Warder in his *Indian Buddhism* (1970:81-106 = ch 4).

The teachings of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta opens with six lists: the first on a nation's welfare [§§1.1.4-5] and the other five on the preservation and growth of the Teaching, that is, the “conditions for non-decline of the Sangha” (*aparihāniya,dhammā*) [§§1.6-11]. The first five sets of *aparihāniyā dhammā* (of which the awakening-factors, *bojjhaṅgā*, are the fourth) have 7 points each, and finally a set of 6 [§1.11]. The Mūlasarvāstivādin Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra gives 6 sets of *aparihāṇīyā dharmāḥ* (of which the awakening-factors, *bodhy-aṅgā*, are the sixth), and finally a set of 6 (Waldschmidt, *Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra*, 1950-51:128). Bareau discusses the different lists of *aparihāṇīyā dharmāḥ* in the various extant versions of the Sūtra (*Recherches* 1963-71, 2:32-39): 7 of the 8 versions include the *bodhy-aṅgā*.<sup>273</sup>

Understandably, with the Buddha's impending parinirvana, the main concern here is the future of the Teaching and the Sangha. The importance of these passages are reflected in the fact that they are found “to afford a considerable amount of parallel material in Buddhist Sanskrit sources and in Chinese and Tibetan translations” (Gethin 2001:229).

**(10b) THE 37 LIMBS OF AWAKENING.** At the Hall of the Gabled House (*kūṭ'āgāra,sālā*) [§3.50], the Buddha gives another teaching list of **seven items** (sets comprising the 37 limbs of awakening).<sup>274</sup> The Pali Sutta and its Sanskrit versions as well as its Chinese and Tibetan translations<sup>275</sup> “apparently include a version of the present incident, namely a summary of the Buddha's teaching based on the seven sets and given by the Buddha in the context of the announcement of his imminent *parinirvāṇa*” (Gethin 2001:231). Gethin goes on to set out the Mūlasarvāstivādin version to show both a basic correspondence with the Pali version as well as interesting variations in details:

Then the Blessed One went to the meeting hall. Having reached there, he sat down on the prepared seat before the order of monks. Seated thus, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Impermanent are all formations [conditions], bhikshus, they are unstable, uncertain, their nature is to change. To that extent, bhikshus, enough with the forming of all formations, one should let go (of them). Therefore, bhikshus, those dharmas which conduce to good and happiness here and now, to good and happiness in the future—having grasped and mastered them, monks should thus preserve them, give instruction in them, teach them, so that the holy life might endure long; this will be for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, good and happiness of devas and humans. And what are those dharmas...? Just these, *the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right efforts [abandonings?], the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the noble eightfold path.*”<sup>276</sup>

<sup>272</sup> See also Warder 1980:81.

<sup>273</sup> See Gethin 2001:146 f.

<sup>274</sup> *Bodhi,pakkhiya.dhamma*: for their detailed studies, see SD 10.

<sup>275</sup> André Bareau [5 above] has given a detailed analysis of the various Parinirvana traditions.

<sup>276</sup> *Māhā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra* (ed Waldschmidt) 222-224: *atha bhagavān yenopasthāna-śālā tenopasamkrāntaḥ. upasamkramya purastād bhikṣu-saṃghasya prajñapta ev'āsane nyasīdat. niṣadya bhagavān bhikṣūn āmantrayate sma. anityā bhikṣavaḥ sarva-saṃskārā adhruvā anāśvāsikā vipariṇāma-dharmaṇo yāvad alam eva bhikṣavaḥ sarva-saṃskārān saṃskārituṃ alam virantum. tasmāt tarhi bhikṣavo ye te dharmā dṛṣṭa-dharma-hitāya samvartante dṛṣṭa-dharma-sukhāya samparāya-hitāya samparāya-sukhāya te bhikṣubhir udgrhya paryavāpya tathā tathā dhārayitavyā grāhayitavyā vācayitavyā yathēdam brahmacaryam cira-sthitikam syāt tad bhaviṣyati bahu-jana-hitāya bahu-jana-sukhāya lokānukampārthāya hitāya sukhāya deva-manuṣyānām. katame te dharmā dṛṣṭa-dharma-hitāya samvartante...tadyathā catvāri smṛty-upasthānāni hitāya samyak prahānāni catvāri ṛddhi-pādāḥ pañcendriyāṇi pañca bālāni sapta bodhy-aṅgāny āryāṣṭāṅgo mārgaḥ. Cf Divy 207 f.*

Gethin notes that the opening formula of this Mūlasarvāstivādin version “seems to parallel in spirit what comes at the close of the Pāli passage” (2001:232).<sup>277</sup> The above Mūlasarvāstivādin excerpt is also found in another context, namely, that of the Buddha’s first illness and his remarking about the closed first of the teacher [§§2.23-25]. Gethin mentions that the lacuna in the Sanskrit manuscript here and quotes Snellgrove’s translation from the Tibetan to fill this gap:

Ānanda, I do not have the idea that the order of monks is mine, that I must cleave to the order and lead it, so how should I have a last exhortation, even a slight one, with which to instruct the order? Whatever teachings I have had which were relevant to the order of monks, I have already taught them as the principles which must be practised, namely, [**the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the noble eightfold path**]. As Buddha I do not have the closed-fistedness of a teacher who thinks he must conceal things as unsuitable to others.

(Snellgrove, BSOAS 36, 1973:401)

The 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi, pakkhiya.dhamma*) in the form of a set of 7 teachings as tools in the preservation of the teaching are found in a number of suttas, such as **the Sampasādanīya Sutta** (D 28/3:99-116), **the Pāsādika Sutta** (D 29/3:117-141), **the Kin’ti Sutta** (M 103/2:238-243), and **the Sāma, gāma Sutta** (M 104/ 2:243-251).<sup>278</sup> Rupert Gethin’s *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* (2001) is a monograph on the 37 limbs of awakening, which he discusses by way of these “seven sets” of teachings.

**(10c) THE SEVEN SETS.** The oldest set of the “great references” (*mahāpadesā*) serving as quality control in the transmission of the Dharma is evidently that found in **the Pāsādika Sutta** (D 3:128) of the Dīgha Nikāya. The Sutta opens immediately after the death of “Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta,” when quarrels and disagreement split the Jain community. In this connection, the Buddha exhorts Cunda Samaṇ’uddesa<sup>279</sup> thus:

If anyone, Cunda, speaking rightly, were to speak of a well spoken, fully accomplished holy life that has been well proclaimed, accomplished in every way, with nothing less, with nothing more,

speaking rightly, he would speak of this very well spoken, fully accomplished holy life that has been well proclaimed, accomplished in every way, with nothing less, with nothing more.

Therefore, Cunda, all of you to whom I have taught these truths that I have directly known should gather together and recite them, comparing meaning with meaning, comparing text with text [comparing spirit with spirit, letter with letter], without dissension [without quarrelling],

so that this holy life might endure, stand long,

and this for for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans.

And what, Cunda, are these teachings, directly understood by me, that I have shown you, that, all, having gathered and assembled, should not quarrel, but rehearse [recite] meaning for meaning, word for word?

They are (the 37 limbs of awakening) namely (the seven sets):<sup>280</sup>

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| the 4 focusses of mindfulness,  | <i>cattāro satipaṭṭhāna</i> <sup>281</sup> |
| the 4 right efforts,            | <i>samma-p, padhāna</i> <sup>282</sup>     |
| the 4 paths to spiritual power, | <i>iddhi, pādā</i> <sup>283</sup>          |
| the 5 spiritual faculties,      | <i>pañc’indriya</i> . <sup>284</sup>       |

<sup>277</sup> He also notes that two other sections of this excerpt are found to parallel two passages in other parts of the Pali Canon. He notes that this is rare. (Gethin 2002:232)

<sup>278</sup> See §10d below & Gethin 2001:232-240 for a useful discussion.

<sup>279</sup> The younger brother of Sāriputta.

<sup>280</sup> These 7 sets are listed in **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 19.3.50b/2:120 & SD 9 (10c)) given in full in **Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77.15-21/2:11 f = SD 6.18) and as practised by various monks, in **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118.13/3:81 = SD 7.13).

<sup>281</sup> See D 1:56, 339, 2:83, 290-315, 3:101; S 3:96, 153; A 2:218, 3:12.

<sup>282</sup> See V 1:22; D 2:120; M 3:296, 2:96; A 2:74, 15 f.

<sup>283</sup> See D 2:213, 221; M 1:103 = 2:11; A 1:39, 297, 2:256, 3:82; Vbh 213.

the 5 spiritual powers,                      *pañca, bala*<sup>285</sup>  
the 7 awakening-factors,                    *satta bojjhaṅga*.<sup>286</sup>  
the noble eightfold path.                    *ariyo aṭṭh'aṅgiko magga*<sup>287</sup>      (D 29.16+17/3:127 f)

The emphasis here is on avoiding dispute and reaching clear agreement: the monks should not quarrel, and should not allow the teaching to be distorted.<sup>288</sup> Paralleling the four great references, the procedure laid out by **the Pāsādika Sutta** is as follows:

<sup>289</sup> And, Cunda, when you are gathered together harmoniously,  
you should train yourselves thus when a certain fellow in the holy life speaks the Dharma  
before the sangha.

Now, suppose he were to speak thus:

1. “You have grasped *both* the meaning and the wording of this *wrongly*,” or
2. “You have grasped the meaning *wrongly* but the wording *rightly*,” or
3. “You have grasped the meaning *rightly* but the wording *wrongly*.”

Neither approving nor disapproving, you should, with careful attention, make him comprehend *only the disagreed points*.

Now, suppose he were to speak thus:

4. “You have grasped *both* the meaning and the wording *rightly*,”  
then you should applaud him, saying,  
“Sadhu! [Excellent!]...This is a great advantage to us all that you are so accomplished in its  
meaning and its wording!”  
(D 29.18-21/3:129; abridged & paraphrased)

**The Sāmagāma Sutta** (M 104/2:243-251) appears in some way to be the Majjhima Nikāya version of the Pāsādika Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya. Both Suttas open with mentioning the Buddha dwelling among the Sakyas, immediately after the death of “Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta,” when quarrels and disagreement split the Jain community. In both Suttas, both Cunda and Ānanda mention the incident to the Buddha. In the Sāmagāma Sutta, however, Ānanda concludes with a more specific point, and the Buddha responds:

“This occurs to me, bhante: Let not a dispute arise in the Sangha after the passing away of the Blessed One. Such a dispute would be to the detriment of the many, the unhappiness of the many, the loss, detriment and suffering of devas and humans.”

“What do you think, Ānanda? Those things that I have directly known and taught you, namely, the four focusses of mindfulness...the noble eightfold path—Ānanda, do you see any two monks who have differing opinions regarding them?”  
(M 104.4/2:245)

Ānanda replies no but suggests that after the Buddha’s passing those who live taking him as their refuge might become involved in dispute “in connection with livelihood” (*ajjh’ājīva*) and “in connection with the code of discipline” (*adhipātimokkha*),<sup>290</sup> and that this would be to the disadvantage of the many. The Buddha, however, replies:

<sup>284</sup> See M 1:295; S 3:46, 225, 4:168; A 2:151. See foll n.

<sup>285</sup> See D 2:120, 239; M 2:12, 3:296; S 3:96, 153, 4:366; A 3:10, 12; Vbh 342.

<sup>286</sup> See D 2:79, 83, 120, 302, 3:101, 128, 251, 282; M 1:11, 2:12; S 1:54, 5:83; A 1:14, 4:23; Vbh 277.

<sup>287</sup> See D 1:256 f, 165, 312; M 1:61, 118, 3:251; It 18; Sn 1130; Vbh 235.

<sup>288</sup> See Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:232 f.

<sup>289</sup> *Tesaṅ ca vo cunda samaggānaṃ sammodamānānaṃ avivadamānānaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ, aññataro sabrahmacārī saṅghe dhammaṃ bhāseyya. Tatra ce tumhākaṃ evaṃ assa—(1) atthaṅ c’eva micchā gaṇhāti, vyañjanāni ca micchā ropetī ti...; (2) atthaṃ hi kho micchā gaṇhāti, vyañjanāni sammā ropetī ti...; (3) atthaṃ hi kho sammā gaṇhāti, vyañjanāni micchā ropetī ti—tassa n’eva abhinanditabbaṃ na paṭikkositabbaṃ. Anabhinanditvā appaṭikkositvā so evaṃ assa vacanīyo; (4) atthaṅ ñ’eva sammā gaṇhāti, vyañjanāni sammā ropetī ti.*

<sup>290</sup> *Ajjh’ājīva* and *adhipātimokkha*, see CPD which qu MA 4:38.



“Ānanda, a dispute about livelihood or about the Pātimokkha would be trifling. But, Ānanda, should there arise in the Sangha a dispute about the path or the way, such a dispute would be to the detriment of the many, the unhappiness of the many, the loss, detriment and suffering of devas and humans!” (M 104.5/2:245)

Similarly, **the Kin’ti Sutta** (M 103/2:238-243), focussing on the centrality of the seven sets forming the 37 limbs of awakening, teaches ways of overcoming any disagreement regarding the spirit and the letter of the Dharma. The Sutta opens with the Buddha declaring:

Bhikshus, what do you think of me? That the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of robes? Or, that the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of almsfood? Or, that the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of lodgings? Or, that the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of this or that existence [different states of being]? (M 103.2/2:238)

The monks reply that the Buddha “is compassionate, one seeks after our good; he teaches the Dharma out of compassion.”

“Therefore, monks, those things that I have directly known and taught you, namely, the four focusses of mindfulness...the noble eightfold path—in these things you should all train yourself in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing.

While you are training yourself in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, let not any two monks differ in opinions regarding the Dharma (*abhidhamme*).” (M 103.3-4/2:239)

The Buddha then shows how to deal with possible areas of discord: where there is disagreement about the meaning (*attha*) and the wording (*vyañjana*), that is, both together and each separately; where a monk commits some offence (*āpatti*) or transgression (*vītikama*); where argument and ill feeling exist between groups (M 103.5-7/2:239-243).

As the 37 “actors leading to awakening,” the seven sets constitute the “path cultivation” (*magga, bhāvanā*) (V 3:93, 4:126), a fact also reflected in **the Abhidharma,kośa Bhāṣya** (AbhkB tr Pruden 1988: 1022 f). It is clear, therefore, as Gethin wisely observes (referring to “the Dharma Mirror”),<sup>291</sup> that the appeal to the seven sets of teachings,

is not an appeal to *dhammas* as “teachings” or “doctrines”—at least not in the limited sense of a body of teachings or doctrines that can exist apart from the actual path and way. The nature of the appeal to the seven sets is a matter of appeal to practice and experience rather than an appeal to theory and scripture. The appeal ultimately rests on the fact that the seven sets embrace *dhammas* that the *bhikkhu* [or practitioner] can gain personal direct knowledge of, they constitute *dhamma* that is “to be known by the wise each one for himself” (*paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*).

(Gethin 2001:236)

Gethin follows with an instructive discussion on the seven sets which should be fully read (2001:236-263).

This important list of dharmas forms the matrix (*māṭikā/māṭṛkā*), defined thus in the *Dictionary of Buddhism*:

a rubric or tabulated summary of contents used in the philosophical sections of the books of the Abhidharma Piṭaka. Originally a Vinaya term, used in the singular (Pāli, *māṭikā*), it meant a keyword. Used in the plural (also *māṭikā*), it means the keywords for a topic, and hence a list.

In other words, they are the living essence of the Buddha’s Teaching. The Abhidharma,kośa Bhāṣya refers these dharmas as that aspect of the True Teaching (*saddharma*) pertaining to realization (*adhigama*). The teachings of the Sūtra, the Vinaya and the Abhidharma, on the other hand are the “traditions” (*āgama*) (AbhkB:P 1281).<sup>292</sup> It is through the 37 limbs of awakening that the holy life (*brahma, cāriya*) is able to endure and stand long (*addhaniya cira-ṭ, ṭhitika*, D 3:27).

<sup>291</sup> D 16.2.9/ 2:93; also Nm 1:132.

<sup>292</sup> See Gethin 2001:56 f & K Dhammajoti, *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma*, Kelaniya, 2002:7 f.



Summary of the suttas in connection with the 7 sets\*

**Pāsādika Sutta:** “You should gather together and recite them [the 7 sets], comparing meaning with meaning, comparing text with text [comparing spirit with spirit, letter with letter], without dissension [without quarrelling]” (D 29.18/3:128).

**Sāmagāma Sutta:** “A dispute about livelihood or about the Pātimokkha would be trifling. But, Ānanda, should there arise in the Sangha a dispute about the path or the way, such a dispute would be to the detriment of the many...” (M 104.5/2:245)

**Kin’ti Sutta:** “You should all train yourself in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing... let not any two monks differ in opinions regarding the Dharma” (M 103.4/2:239)

**Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta:** “You should learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them” [§3.50].

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\*The first three suttas here are the oldest references to the method of authentication of the Buddha’s teaching; the second stage in this development is found in the **Peṭakōpadesa** and the **Nettipakaraṇa**; the third stage is found in the **Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** [§4.7-11] and the **Commentaries**.

**(10d) The three trainings**

The Sutta Piṭaka (Basket of Discourses) opens with 13 suttas (forming the *Sīla-k,khandha Vagga*),<sup>293</sup> dealing with the fruits of recluseship (*sāmañña,phala*) (D 1:1-253).<sup>294</sup> Technically, the “fruits” of recluseship are fourfold: streamwinning, once-return, non-return and arhathood.<sup>295</sup> Often, however, the *stages* of the fruits of recluseship are laid out, as in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2). The elaborate stages of the fruits of recluseship generally follow a well-defined order: the preliminary stages of the path cultivate “moral virtue” (*sīla*), the middle stages “mental concentration” (*samādhi*), and the final stages “wisdom” (*paññā*).<sup>296</sup>

One of the most important expressions of the progressive development of the fruits of recluseship is the formula of progressive talk (*ānupubbī,kathā*), here given in full:

Then the Blessed One gave him a progressive talk—that is to say, he spoke on giving (*dāna*), on moral virtue (*sīla*) and on the heavens (*sagga*). He explained the danger, the vanity and the disadvantages of sensual pleasures (*kām’ādīnava*), and the advantages of renunciation (*nekkham-m’ānisaṃsa*). When the Blessed One perceived that the listener’s mind was prepared, pliant, free from obstacles, elevated and lucid, then he explained to him the teaching peculiar to the Buddhas (*buddhānaṃ sāmukkaṃsikaṃ desanā*), that is to say, suffering (*dukkha*), its arising, its cessation, and the path. (V 1:15; D 1:148; A 3:184 etc)

The stages of the fruits of recluseship also constitute the three trainings (*ti sikkhā*)<sup>297</sup>—as moral virtue (*sīla*), mental concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*)—which are given in stock and recur nine times throughout **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta**:

<sup>293</sup> “The chapter on the groups of moral virtue,” comprising vol 1 of the Pali Text Society’s ed of Dīgha.

<sup>294</sup> This usage of the term is found at D 1:51 f; Vism 215; VvA 71; VbhA 317. The **Majjhima** appears to use a slightly abbreviated form of the *sīla-k,khandha vagga* material (M 1:178-184, 267-271, 3:33-36, 134-147. See Gethin 2001:208 for details.

<sup>295</sup> D 3:227, 277; S 5:25; Dhs 1016; DhsA 423; Miln 344, 358; three mentioned at Kvu 112.

<sup>296</sup> D 2:1:47-86 = SD 8.10. Gethin’s n: “In **the sīlakkhandha-vagga** the terminology in fact varies. The *Sāmañña-phala-sutta*, while giving the account in full, does not explicitly divide it into three categories. This is true also of the *Kūṭadanta-*, *Mahāli-*, *Jāliya-*, *Kevaddha-* and *Lohicca-suttas*. (The *Poṭṭhapāda-* and *Tevijja-suttas* depart from the standard pattern after the account of the fourth *jhāna*, inserting descriptions of the four formless attainments and four *brahma-vihāras* respectively.) In the *Ambaṭṭha-sutta* the categories are just two, *carāṇa* and *vijjā*; in the *Soṇadaṇḍa-sutta* just as *sīla* and *paññā*; in the *Kassapasīhanāda-sutta* they are *sīla-sampadā* and *paññā-sampadā*; in the *Subhā-sutta* they are called *sīla-kkhandha*, *samādhi-kkhandha* and *paññā-kkhandha*” (2001:207 n79).

<sup>297</sup> D 1:207, 3:220; A 1:229.

This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated<sup>298</sup> with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from the mental influxes,<sup>299</sup> that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.

(D 16.1.12, 1.14, 1.18, 2.4, 2.10, 2.20, 4.4, 4.12)<sup>300</sup>

We have a basic hierarchy of spiritual progress in terms of moral development, mental development and spiritual wisdom.<sup>301</sup> Understandably, if one tries to develop wisdom (*paññā*), one first needs some measure of mental concentration (*samādhi*). If one tries to cultivate concentration, clearly one needs some measure of moral virtue.

What this means in practice is that it is understood that someone can have developed *sīla* but need not necessarily have developed *samādhi* and *paññā*; someone can have developed *sīla* and *samādhi*, but not necessarily have developed *paññā* to any great degree. However, the converse cannot be so. This is reflected in the corresponding hierarchy of religious goals. The development of *sīla* alone leads to a happy rebirth in the *kāma-loka*; the development of *sīla* and *samādhi* to rebirth in the *brahma-loka*; by developing *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* rebirth in all kinds is transcended. (Gethin 2001:209)

Gethin goes on to quote this important passage from **the Vimutti,magga**:

After acknowledging the Path of Freedom, through virtue he transcends the way to the states of regress (*apāya*); through concentration, he transcends the sense plane, through wisdom he transcends all becoming [existence]. If he practises virtue to the full and practises little of concentration and wisdom, he will reach the state of Stream-entrant and stage of Once-returner. If he practises virtue and concentration to the full [but] practises little of wisdom, he will reach the stage of Non-returner. If he practises virtue, concentration and wisdom to the full, he will reach the peerless freedom of the Consummate One. (Vimm:ESK 5; cf A 4:380 f)

By the end of the Nikāya period (when the compilation of the four Nikāyas and the Sutta,nipāta were more or less fixed), if not earlier, this threefold system has been applied to the three stages of the noble path.<sup>302</sup> LS Cousins, in his article, “Samatha-yāna and Vipassanā-yāna” (1984), adds this helpful explanation related to the above remark:

This might be better expressed by saying that all *ariya* disciples have mastered the precepts; the never-returner has mastered both *sīla* and *samādhi*; while the arahat has mastered wisdom as well. This corresponds quite closely to the structure of the Buddhist cosmos. One is reborn as a deva through generosity and keeping the precepts, as a brahma through developing *samādhi* and in the Pure Abodes by developing wisdom. Quite logically all brahmas are also devas but not vice versa, while all those resident in the Pure Abodes are both devas and brahmas.

<sup>298</sup> “Well cultivated,” *paribhāvito*. In a stock simile, eggs are said to be *paribhāvītāni* (M 1:104; S 3:153) by a brooding hen. According to Rhys Davids, in medicine, the word means “charged with, impregnated with.” See J 1:380, 4:407; cf Miln 361, 382, 394; cf Bhagavad Gītā 3.38 for this simile.

<sup>299</sup> “**Mental influxes**,” *āsava*, lit “inflow, outflow,” which comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsavas*: the influxes of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of three influxes (omitting the influx of views) [§43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: āsava.

<sup>300</sup> **The 3 trainings**, see §16.1 n in the sutta.

<sup>301</sup> See eg **Subha S** (M 99/2:196-209) and **Kassapa Sīhanāda S = Mahā Sīhanāda S** (D 8).

<sup>302</sup> A 1:231-235, 4:380 f; Pug 37; cf A 2:136.

This may be termed the *vertical structure* of the path. An alternative view becomes very important in the Abhidhamma. The whole of the path is seen as arising together in unity at the moment of attainment. This we will call the *horizontal structure*. It is applied, for example, to the *bodhi-pakkhiya-dhammas* in relation to each of the four paths (*magga*). On a lesser level it is applied to the five faculties (*indriya*) in relation to *jhāna*. (L S Cousins, 1984:57)

While the sliding hierarchy of the three trainings forms a neat theory, the reality of practice is rather subtle.<sup>303</sup> In fact, moral virtue, concentration and wisdom are inextricably bound together. This means that the spiritual beginner should not only establish himself in moral virtue, but should also at least cultivate some level of concentration and wisdom, and the adept at the advanced stages of the path, accomplished in wisdom, nevertheless needs moral virtue and concentration. This is clearly reflected in Soṇadaṇḍa's words to the Buddha who approves of them:<sup>304</sup>

Just as, Gotama, one might wash hand with hand or foot with foot; even so, wisdom is fully cleansed by moral virtue, moral virtue is fully cleansed by wisdom. Where there is moral virtue, there is wisdom; where there is wisdom, there is moral virtue. The morally virtuous has wisdom; the wise has moral virtue. Moral virtue and wisdom are declared the summit of the world. (D 4.21/1:124)

In terms of actual practice, the noble eightfold path formula is always given as *sīla-samādhi-pañña*, as stated in **the Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta** (M 44), where the nun Dhammadinnā explains to the layman Visā-kha, thus:

The three aggregates<sup>305</sup> [three trainings] are not included by the noble eightfold path, avuso Visā-kha, but the noble eightfold path is included by the three aggregates. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood: these states are included in the aggregate of moral virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration: these states are included in the aggregate of concentration. Right view and right thought: these states are included in the aggregate of wisdom. (M 44.11/1:301)

In the traditional arrangement of the noble eightfold path, we have the sequence, *pañña-sīla-samādhi*. The very first of the eight path-factors is right view (*sammā, diṭṭhi*), whose primacy on the spiritual path is clearly explained in **the Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta** (M 117). If life is a journey, then the pilgrim's goal is the city of nirvana. The path leading to nirvana is the noble eightfold path (*ariya'atṭhaṅgika magga*). The guide on this noble path is right view, and as long as he is ahead of others, the pilgrim is on the right track. Conversely, one is easily lost when one is (mis)guided by wrong view. The recurring theme of this sutta is the primacy of right view with regard to “noble right concentration along with its support and equipment” (*ariyam... sammā, samādhim ...sa, upanisaṃ sa, parikkharam*) [§§2, 3] and that “in this regard, bhikkhus, right view comes first” (*tatra sammā, diṭṭhi pubbaṃ, gamā*) [§§4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 34 f] (M 117/3:71-78). In other words, the noble eightfold path deals with the three trainings in a different way.

While [the noble eightfold path] does not by way of content fully embrace the aggregates of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *pañña*, its eight factors do collectively touch on and comprise each of these three aspects—uniquely among the seven sets. Thus the eight factors collectively represent, as it were, an actual manifestation of all three aspects, so that the *ariyo atṭhaṅgiko maggo* can be seen as the essential distillation of the aggregates of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *pañña*. The *ariyo atṭhaṅgiko maggo* comprises the whole of the spiritual life precisely in the sense that it is the consummation of the development of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *pañña*. It is the path or way of life that issues from that develop-

<sup>303</sup> A number of scholars have pointed this out: H Saddhātissa, *Buddhist Ethics*, London, 1970:68; R Gombrich, “Notes on the brahminical background to Buddhist ethics” in G Dhammapala, *Buddhist Studies in honour of Ham-malava Saddhatissa*, 1984:91-102; and R Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:209-212.

<sup>304</sup> In **Soṇa, daṇḍa S** (D 4), the stages of the path are considered only as *sīla* and *pañña*. Implicit here is that these two in themselves conduce to the cultivation of moral virtue.

<sup>305</sup> Here, “aggregates” (*khandha*) is simply collective term, referring to the components of each state of the three trainings.

ment. In other words, the development of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* in all its various aspects culminates in right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right striving, right mindfulness, right concentration—*paññā*, *sīla*, and *samādhi*, the three essential aspects of spiritual practice in perfect balance. It is only in this manner that the treatment of the *ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo* in the *Cūḷavedalla-sutta* becomes properly intelligible. (Gethin 2001:212)

The noble eightfold path therefore does not comprise successful stages like a three-rung ladder nor even milestones or signboards along the way. They constitute a path, not in a linear progression from start to finish; rather, “they embody a complete ‘way of going along’ or ‘mode of practice’—a *paṭipadā*. The eight factors embrace all that is essential to spiritual progress” (Gethin 2001:212).

In the **Ānāpāna,sati Sutta** (M 118), the Buddha declares that there various groups of monks each engaged in the cultivation of one of the seven sets (M 118.13/3:81). This clearly shows that the sets are all tools for gaining the same goal. In fact, the Nikāyas seem to suggest that by developing just one of the 37 methods (comprising the 7 sets) to completion, one reaches the end of the path of awakening. Yet

[t]he bringing to fulfillment of any one of the seven sets cannot be accomplished without bringing to fulfillment all seven sets. For, as the *Nettipakaraṇa* puts it, all *dhammas* that lead to awakening and contribute to awakening have but one characteristic, the characteristic of “leading out” [*niyyānika*]. In other words, there exists between the thirty-seven *dhammas* a relationship of reciprocity and radical interdependence. (Gethin 2001:352)

## 11 The four great references

**(11a) DEFINITIONS OF MAHĀPADESA.** **Buddhaghosa** explains *mahāpadesā* as “great occasions” (*mahā okāse*) or as “great references” (*mahā apadesa*) (DA 2:565).<sup>306</sup> The former emphasizes the reception of teaching while the latter the sources. In other words, these are the four “normative” means<sup>307</sup> by which one may receive any transmission of the Dharma and Vinaya. Buddhaghosa goes on to explain “the word and syllables” (*pada, vyañjanāni*) as “sounds which are reckoned as words” (DA 2:565).

**Dhammapāla**, however, contra Buddhaghosa, analyses the term as *attha, pada* (word meaning) and *vyañjana, pada* (word phrase) (DAṬ 2:212), that is, the spirit and the letter. “Buddhaghosa’s understanding lead to defining *otāretabb[ā]ni* as ‘to be collated,’ whereas Dhammapāla’s definition results in what we can translate as ‘to be entered into (the Four Noble Truths)’” (An Yang-Gyu 2002b:57).

It is clear from the Vinaya that during the Buddha’s lifetime up and within decades of his passing, the Vinaya *mahāpadesā* were in force, towards the end of the Buddha’s life or very soon after, the Dharma Vinaya *mahāpadesā* were formulated to cover both monastic discipline and the teachings. This shows that the four human sources of disciplinary and doctrinal authority were superseded by some form of canon.

In this respect, the sermon on *mahāpadesa* might have been composed after the standard oral texts had been compiled, even though it is ascribed to the Buddha before he attains *parinibbāna*.<sup>308</sup> This process of making a standard canon out of the oral tradition was the work of monks when the saṅgha had settled into a relatively developed monastic life in a set of self-governed colonies. (An Yang-Gyu 2002b:58)

It is obvious, as Gombrich notes, that “from the first the institution which performed the function of preserving the Buddhist texts much have been the Sangha” and such an endeavour “required organization, and that the Buddhist laity were never organized in a way which would have ensured the transmission of the texts down the generation” (1988:35).

**(11b) ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE GREAT REFERENCES.** An important teaching given by the Buddha on the preservation of the Teaching as text or tradition (*āgama*), but which is also related to the 37 limbs of awakening, are **the four great references** (*mahāpadesa*) [§§4.7-11, qv], which serve as a tool

<sup>306</sup> For a discussion on Buddhaghosa’s “understanding of *mahāpadesa*,” see An Yang-Gyu 2002b:61-64.

<sup>307</sup> Ronald M Davidson 1990:300.

<sup>308</sup> Buddhaghosa says that this teaching is given during the Buddha’s last journey (AA 3:158).



for the criteria of the true teaching.<sup>309</sup> The term *apadesa* means “designation, pointing out; reference; witness, authority” (DP). However, in this context, it is best rendered as “reference” since we actually have only two final “authorities,” that is, the Dharma (the suttas or discourses) and the Vinaya (the Discipline) (V 2:118). This teaching is also found in **the Mahāpadesa Sutta** (A 4.180/2:167-170).

The Mahāvagga of **the Vinaya**, however, has its own, probably older, “four great references,” comprising four criteria for judging the propriety of an act or situation that is not covered by current rules:

1. Whatever has not been ruled as not allowable, if it fits in with what is not allowable (*akappiya*) and goes against what is allowable, that is not allowable.
2. Whatever has not been ruled as not allowable, if it fits in with what is allowable (*kappiya*) and goes against what is not allowable, that is allowable.
3. Whatever has not been ruled as not allowable, if it fits in with what is not allowable (*akappiyānulomiya*) and goes against what is allowable, that is not allowable.
4. Whatever has not been ruled as not allowable, if it fits in with what is allowable (*kappiyānulomiya*) and goes against what is not allowable, that is allowable. (V 1:250)

The Vinaya further has what is called the “Vinaya of presence” (*sammukhā, vinaya*), applicable to any of the four ways of settling legal cases (*adhikaraṇa, samatha*)<sup>310</sup> (V 2:88-93), where the fourfold presence comprises the following:

1. the accused party (individuals);
2. the Sangha or quorum;
3. the Vinaya (ie the proper rules of procedure); and
4. the Dharma (ie the right and just application of the rules to the case).  
(V 2:74, 99-94, 4:207; A 1:99; DhsA 144; V:H 5:117-125; Dutt 1984:129 f; cf M 2:247 ff)

**The four great references** (*mahāpadesa*) as found in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta [§4.7-11] and the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A 2:167-170),<sup>311</sup> “signifies the pointing out or citing of someone as a witness or authority” with regard to some teaching (Cousins 1983:21). If one has heard and received a teaching:<sup>312</sup>

1. from the Blessed One’s own mouth;
2. from a community [sangha] with elders, with distinguished teachers.<sup>313</sup>
3. from many elder monks who are well learned, masters of scripture, Dharma-experts, Vinaya-experts, experts in the Summaries [Matrices].<sup>314</sup>
4. from an elder monk who is well learned, master of scripture, Dharma-expert, Vinaya-expert, expert in the Summaries [Matrices].<sup>315</sup>

Then, bhikkhus, you should neither approve nor disapprove of his word. Neither approving nor disapproving, his words and syllables (*pada, vyañjanāni*) should be carefully studied and checked against (*otāretabbāni*) the Sutta<sup>316</sup> [Teaching] and examined (for conformity) (*sandassetabbāni*)

<sup>309</sup> See Nett:Ñ 37n; Gethin 2002:237-240, on which this section is mainly based; An Yang-Gyu, “Canonization of the Word of the Buddha,” 2002b.

<sup>310</sup> *Adhikaraṇa* is also tr as “legal question” (V:H 5:125-140), “legal dispute,” and “litigation” (M:ÑB 855). The 4 ways of settling a legal question (*adhikaraṇa*) are: (1) a question of legal dispute (*vivādādhikaraṇa*); (2) a question of censure (*anuvādādhikaraṇa*); (3) a question regarding an offence (*āpattādhikaraṇa*); and (4) a question regarding a duty (*kiccādhikaraṇa*). See **Sāma, gāma S** (M 104.12-20/2:247-250).

<sup>311</sup> Also at Nett 21; see Nett:Ñ 37n.

<sup>312</sup> *Eko therō bhikkhū... bahussuto āgat’āgamo dhamma, dharo vinaya, dharo mātikā, dharo.*

<sup>313</sup> *Saṅgho... sa-t, therō sa, pāmokkho.*

<sup>314</sup> *Sambahulā therā bhikkhū... bahussutā āgat’āgamā dhamma, dharā vinaya, dharā mātikā, dharā.*

<sup>315</sup> *Eko therō bhikkhū... bahussuto āgat’āgamo dhamma, dharo vinaya, dharo mātikā, dharo.*

<sup>316</sup> “Checked against the Sutta,” *sutte otaranti*, lit “they descend into the Sutta.” This unusual expression is “best interpreted in the light of the *Peṭakōpadesa* tradition where *otaraṇā* is one of the sixteen *hāras*” [Peṭk 11, 98-101, 157 etc; Nett 21 f, 63-70, 107; Nett:Ñ xl, 1, 37 n125/1] (Cousins 1983:3). Cf Jaini (ed), *Abhidharma, dīpa*, Patna, 1977: Intro p27 on Nett.



against the Vinaya [Discipline]. If, upon such checking [collating] and examining, they are found to conform neither to the Sutta nor to the Vinaya, then it should be concluded: ‘Surely, this is not the Blessed One’s Word. It has been wrongly understood by this monk,’ and the matter is to be rejected. But where, upon such checking [collating] and examining, they are found to conform to the Sutta and the Vinaya, it should be concluded, ‘Surely, this is the Blessed One’s Word. It has been rightly understood by this elder.’ (D 16.4.7-11/2:123 f)

The *mahāpadesa* passage of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta strikingly parallels the *sammukhā,vinaya* passage both in form and content:

We find a striking parallelism in structure and words between *mahāpadesa* and *sammukhāvinaya*; the four human sources of *mahāpadesa* appear in the *sammukhāvinaya*. And the qualifications of these human sources are described in almost exactly the same words. This *sammukhāvinaya* treats the Buddha as the final authority, before him a saṅgha, then a group of monks, and lastly a single monk, but *mahāpadesa* in [the Mahā Parinibbāna sutta] subordinates these four sources, beginning with the Buddha,<sup>317</sup> to the texts of the *sutta* and the *vinaya*. (An Yang-Gyu 2002b:61)

In a similar observation, George Bond suggests that the use of the term *sammukhā* in the *mahāpadesa* implies a reference to a *sammukhā,vinaya* proceeding (1982:25-28). An Yang-Gyu concurs, adding

It is not unreasonable to assume that *sammukhāvinaya*<sup>318</sup> was practised to settle the disputes over *dhamma* and *vinaya* during the Buddha’s lifetime, while *mahāpadesa* was invented on the basis of *sammukhāvinaya* for the same purpose after the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*. I would further like to suggest that even if there were fixed authoritative texts, they were not more authoritative than the Buddha while he was alive. But, after the Buddha’s death the settled texts assumed the Buddha’s authority. After the Buddha’s death, monks must have needed to organize the Buddha’s words into the texts, which in due course become immovable authorities. *Mahāpadesa* is a monastic device to make a standard canon which assumes supreme authority in the Buddha’s absence. (An Yang-Gyu 200b 61)

Lamotte distinguishes a two-stage of the four great references: the external and the internal. The first stage, or “external” criterion, consists in the monk’s appeal to the four great references to support this claim that a teaching represents Dharma, Vinaya and the Teacher’s Teaching, that is, by way of the “Vinaya of presence” mentioned above. The Vinaya contains a lengthy discussion on such cases of disputes (*vivādādhikaraṇa*) regarding the proper definition of Dharma Vinaya, and the prescribed methods for settling them (V 2:88-104).

The second stage, or “internal” criterion, according to **George Bond**, is the new element in the great references, that “the bhikkhu must apply to a saying as *dhamma, vinaya* and *satthu sāsana*” (1982:28). **Lamotte** (1947:221) rejects Buddhaghosa’s interpretations (DA 565-568) that at the both *sutta* and *vinaya* refer to parts of the Vinaya Piṭaka, with *sutta* referring to its “pithy sayings”; and that the two terms could also refer to the two Piṭakas (the Sutta,piṭaka and the Vinaya,piṭaka), or to all three Piṭakas (where *sutta* refers to both the Sutta,piṭaka and the Abhidhamma,piṭaka).

The very existence of such a formula as the great references reflects the unsettled state of the canon. In fact, the various interpretations given by Buddhaghosa supports the purpose of the great references: that a statement should be checked against an established body of teachings, and that only those that are compatible with this established corpus should be accepted (DA 567). George Bond provides this insight:

Rather than implying completed texts, *sutta* and *vinaya* probably referred to essential doctrines and basic rules which existed side by side in some form of oral tradition. The view of what

<sup>317</sup> An Yang-Gyu: “Surely the Buddha himself is not subordinated, but a proposal ascribed to the Buddha is.” (fn)

<sup>318</sup> “The term [*mahāpadesa*] could simply mean ‘face to face,’ ‘from the mouth of’; in other contexts it is used as part of an oath asserting the truth of a teaching or belief (eg M 3:119). Both *mahāpadesa* and *sammukhāvinaya* refer to the same procedure and criteria of authority.” (An Yang-Gyu 2002b:61 n30)

these terms might have meant is supported by another text in the Theravada tradition, the *Netti-Pakaraṇa*. (1982:29)

S Dutt, in his *Early Buddhist Monachism*, remarks that the four great references of the Vinaya are “the material sources” of Buddhist monastic law (2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1984:21). However, while the Buddha himself is the “formal source”—that from which the rule of law derives its force and validity—the “material sources” are the Dharma Vinaya. These great references are only special provisions for deciding the propriety of an act or situation.

**(11c) TEXTUAL AUTHORITY AND PERSONAL AUTHORITY.** An earlier form of hermeneutical tool for settling doctrinal disputes is found in **the Kinti Sutta** (M 103) which records that the Buddha, after listing the list of “the 7 sets” [10c], declares to the monks (and all practitioners) that

in these things you should all train in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing.

While you are training in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, two monks might make different assertions with regard to the Dharma (*abhidhamme*)... (M 103.3-4/2:239 f)

The Buddha goes on to point out how the monks should settle any differences regarding the spirit [meaning] (*attha*) or the letter [phrasing] (*vyañjana*) of the teaching by amicably reasoning them out. The *Majjhima Commentary* glosses *abhidhamme* as referring to the 7 sets (MA 4:29). This important passage<sup>319</sup> on the resolution of doctrinal problems is a good example of early Buddhist hermeneutics is found in a slightly expanded version in **the Pāsādika Sutta** (D 29).<sup>320</sup>

It is interesting to note that in **the Kinti Sutta** (M 103), the Buddha makes an exception of the third method of resolving doctrinal conflict,<sup>321</sup> that is, agreeing about the spirit but differing about the letter of the teaching, “but the phrasing is a mere trifle. Let the venerable ones not fall into a dispute over a mere trifle” (M 103.7/2:240). However, in the *Adhikaraṇa Vagga* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha points out that the wrong expression of the spirit and of the letter are two factors responsible for the distortion and disappearance of the true Dharma (A 2.20/1:59). In this light, the instruction given in the *Kinti Sutta* should be understood that “slight deviations from the correct phrasing are not necessarily an obstacle to a proper understanding of the meaning” (Bodhi, M:ÑB 1310 n972).<sup>322</sup>

Both these hermeneutical systems regard the Dharma as the final authority, and as such, functions very much like the four great references, of which they are clearly their predecessors and, very likely, their prototypes. The “great references” comprise two aspects: the sources and the authorities. This is clearly a device to transfer scriptural authority from the person to the text, introduced just before or soon after the Buddha’s passing as the Buddhist community has grown into far flung areas of northern India where living authorities were hard to come by or might be misrepresented.<sup>323</sup> The formulation of these four great authorities also entails that there is some form of fixed canon or some early collection such as **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33) and **the Das’uttara Sutta** (D 34).<sup>324</sup>

<sup>319</sup> M 103.5-8/2:239-241.

<sup>320</sup> See **Mahā Sakul’udāyi S** (M 77) = SD 16.18 Intro (1.2).

<sup>321</sup> The four sources of doctrinal problems centre around: (1) differing about both the spirit [meaning] and the letter [phrasing]; (2) differing about the spirit but agreeing about the letter; (3) agreeing about the spirit but differing about the letter; (4) agreeing both about the spirit and the letter.

<sup>322</sup> The scribal tradition of the Pali texts, for example, is full of variant readings and wrong readings, which could all be resolved through careful comparative study of the various other texts (Pali, Sanskrit and various translations) and most important of all, from the living transmission of practitioners (such as forest monks and meditators).

<sup>323</sup> See An Yang-Gyu 2002b 57 f.

<sup>324</sup> **The Saṅgīti S** (D 33) opens by stating that the Buddha is staying in the mango grove of Cunda the smith at Pāvā (D 33.1.1/3:207) [cf 4.13-20] and also gives the occasion for Sāriputta’s teaching was the death of Mahāvīra (the founder of Jainism), following which there was a schism in the Jain order. Discounting the anachronism problem here (Mahāvīra is believed to have died c 527 BC at Pāvā, long before the Buddha), the purpose of the sutta is clear: to provide a list of authentic teachings. **The Das’uttara S** (D 34), a record of Sāriputta’s teaching at Campā, is mostly a rearrangement of D 33. Cf Gethin 1992:162 & An Yang-Gyu 2002b:59 f.

*Mahāpadesa* consists of two levels: the first concerns the human sources and the second provides the two authorities which should control the sources. We can see that the three human sources, let alone the Buddha, are all described as so well qualified that they themselves can play an authoritative role. They are all under the authority of the Buddha while he is alive. However, as monasticism developed after the Buddha's *parinibbāna*, these human sources who used to be under the Buddhas came under the power of the final authority, namely, a definitive collection of texts. In effect, as these human sources are subject to the fixed texts of the *Sutta* and *Vinaya*, "new developments were ruled out, at least on the explicit level." [Reginald Ray 1994:366]

(An Yang-Gyu 2002b:57)

The four great references reject the decisiveness of appeal to human authorities. Instead, they propose that the words and the letters (*pada, vyañjanāni*) (Buddhaghosa) or the spirit and the letter (Dhammapāla) of those teachings "should be carefully studied and checked against the *Sutta* and examined (for conformity) against the *Vinaya*." Such a scheme should understandably have envisaged a more cœnibitical life, comprising of at least small communities of monks in settled dwellings.

The four great references are vital as criteria to *the oral tradition* of early Buddhism for winnowing the grain of Dharma from the husk of wrong view. Without any written scripture, the early Buddhists had to rely on a special code of cross-checking with one another through recital of the teachings—by a proficient individual, or an expert group, or the community itself. The core teachings of the early Dharma is, as evident from a number of early Suttas, the 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi, pakkhiya, dhammā*).

Lamotte, in his paper, "The assessment of textual authenticity in Buddhism" (1983/84), reflecting on the fact that early Buddhism lacks an agreed and fixed canon of scriptures (mainly because here the Dharma is orally transmitted), says:

In order that a text proposed with reference to one of the four Great Authorities [*mahāpadesa*] be guaranteed, it is not necessary for it to be literally produced in the Scriptures, it is enough that its general purport be in keeping with the spirit of the Sūtras, the *Vinaya* and the Buddhist doctrines in general. (Lamotte 1983-84:4-15; see also 1988a:163 f)<sup>325</sup>

Lamotte goes on to cite **the *Netti-p, pakaraṇa*** in this connection. As mentioned earlier, LS Cousins, in his paper, "Pali Oral Literature" (Denwood & Piatigorsky 1983), too, suggests that the particular terms of the *mahāpadesa* passage (*otaranti* and *sandissanti*) should be understood in the light of traditions preserved in **the *Peṭakōpadesa* and *Netti-p, pakaraṇa*** (1983:2 f). According to these quasi-canonical texts, such categories as the aggregates (*khandha*), sense-spheres (*āyatana*), elements (*dhātu*), truths (*sacca*) and dependent arising (*paṭicca, samuppāda*) are to be used to analyze the contents of a discourse and place it in its context in the teaching as a whole.

What is envisaged for *sutta* is not then a set body of literature, but rather a traditional pattern of teaching. Authenticity lies not in historical truth, although that is not doubted, but rather in whether something can accord with the essential structure of the *dhamma* as a whole. If it cannot, it should be rejected. If it can, then it is to be accepted as the utterance of the Buddha. We may compare from the later commentarial tradition: "Whoever... might teach and proclaim the *dhamma*, all that is accounted as actually taught and proclaimed by the Teacher." (Cousins 1983:3)

**(11d) SCRIBAL TRADITIONS.** Theravāda, as a direct descendent of early **Nikāya Buddhism**, has a definite and common corpus of sacred literature, the **Pali Canon**, orally handed down since the Nikāya period, as the final authority. The difference amongst the various orders (*nikāya*) of the Theravada—that is, between the Mahānikāya and the Thammayut in Thailand, or between the Thudhamma and the Shwe-

<sup>325</sup> In an earlier translation work, the *Le Traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna*, Lamotte notes that in later Buddhism [esp the written tradition of the Mahāyāna] that it is increasingly the intrinsic merits of the text itself that determines its acceptance or otherwise as the authentic Buddha Word (1944-70 1:80), qu an Aṅguttara passage: "Whatever is well said, all that is the Blessed One's word" (*yam kiñci subhāsitaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ bhagavato vacanaṃ*, A 4:164) (id 84 n2).

gyin in Burma, or the caste-based Siyam, Amarapura and Rāmañña Nikāyas in Sri Lanka—are their interpretation of the **Vinaya**, not of the Dharma.

The Mahāyāna, on the other hand, is a **scribal tradition**: they rely on written texts, but not all the texts have equal authority since each school within the Mahāyāna rely on a particular text or group of texts. Candrakīrti, for example, looks to the Akṣaya,mati Nirdeśa Sūtra; for Tiantai, it is the Lotus Sutra; for the Huayan, the Avatamsaka Sūtra; for the Yogācāra, the Saṃdhi,nirmocana; and Kukai’s Shingon school centres around Tantric texts. What keeps these schools apart, in theory at least, is their interpretation of the Dharma (although in some cases, of the Vinaya, too).

It is clear that both the Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna (or Hīnayāna) Buddhists see the need for the preservation of their sacred texts. As Reginald Ray notes in his *Buddhist Saints in India*, “In monastic life, great importance is attached to the preservation and mastering of the sacred texts” (1994:399). Buddhaghosa, however, defines the Sutta as the “three baskets” (*tipiṭaka*) handed down to his own Sri Lankan school, “so as to justify the authority of the school’s texts, rejecting the opposing camps’ texts” (An Yang-Gyu 2002b 65).

The four great references of Nikāya Buddhism, however, as we have seen, reject any human authority (including Buddhaghosa), relying, like the early Mahāyāna, on **scriptural authority**, reflected in such texts as the **Catuḥpratisaraṇa Sūtra**:

Rely on the teaching, not the teacher.

Rely on the meaning, not the letter.

Rely on the definitive meaning (*nītārtha*), not the interpretive meaning (*neyārtha*).

Rely on insight (*jñāna*), not on sense-consciousness (*viññāna*).

(Catuḥpratisaraṇa Sūtra)<sup>326</sup>

## 12 The lesser and minor rules

The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta says that the Buddha, in his final instructions, briefly declares that, if the order so wishes, it could abrogate **the lesser and minor rules** (*khuddakānukhuddakā sikkhāpadā*) [§6.3]. Ānanda, however, fails to clarify with the Buddha what are the extent of these rules, so the elders of the Council of Rājagṛha decide not to make any changes to the rules. The Cullavagga (V 11.9/2:287 f) tells of how the monks at the First Council could not agree on which rules should be classed as lesser and minor. Ānanda himself confesses that he had neglected to ask the Buddha on this point. One of the monks made a motion that—since many of the rules affect the laity, and the laity would look down on the monks for rescinding them after the Buddha’s death—none of the rules should be rescinded. This motion was adopted by the Council.

Jotiya Dhirasekera, in his *Buddhist Monastic Discipline* (1981), says that “it is important to recognize the fact that there seems to have existed even during the time of the Buddha a category of sikkhāpadas which carried the designation ‘lesser and minor’ or *khudd[ak]ānukhuddaka*” (1981:165). In fact, (**Matta-so,kārī**) **Sikkhā S** (A 3.85) mentions the “lesser and minor rules” (*khuddakānukhuddakāni sikkhāpadāni*), saying that a virtuous disciples sometimes (unwittingly) transgress some of these rules but they rehabilitate themselves (A 3.85/1:231 f). Its Comy defines *khuddakānukhuddakāni* as referring to all the rules except the four “defeat” (*pārājika*) rule (AA 2:348), which leads Bhikkhu Bodhi to remark that the “stipulation here seems too liberal, for the other classes of the Vinaya rules certainly include precepts that are ‘fundamental to the holy life,’ such as the prohibitions against speaking a deliberate lies and against drinking intoxicants, both of which belongs to the Pācittiya class” (A:NB 288 n63).<sup>327</sup>

During the time of the First Council, the Vinaya records, the elders (it is not stated whether they were Council elder or others) are divided in opinion over what constitutes the lesser and minor rules (V 2:286 f). Strangely, while nowhere in the Vinaya or the Sutta are the lesser and minor rules defined, but in **the Milinda,pañha** explain the “lesser rules” (*khuddakāni sikkhāpadāni*) as referring to those entailing

<sup>326</sup> For a discussion on these “four refuges,” see Piya Tan, *Teaching Methods of the Buddha* 2002: §22.

<sup>327</sup> See Jotiya Dhirasekera, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, 1981:165-170. See also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, ch 6 “The Buddha’s Image and Shadow,” §6.28; & Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, ch 6 “The Buddha’s Image and Shadow,” §6.28.



wrong-doing (*dukkata*) and the “minor rules” (*anukhuddakāni sikkhāpadāni*) as those entailing “wrong speech” (*dubbhasita*) (Miln 145).

In the Dīgha Commentary, Buddhaghosa mentions that Mahā Kassapa, during the First Council, deliberated not to abolish the lesser and minor rules but to maintain the rules in too as they are (DA 2:592; V 2:288), especially when the Vinaya is the lifeblood of the Sangha (VA 1:13). In fact, even before the Buddha’s passing and before the First Council, the elder Upasena Vaṅganta,putta, younger brother of Sāriputta, had proposed that they “should not authorize what has not been authorized, and should not abolish what has been authorized, but conduct themselves in accordance with the promulgated training-rules,”<sup>328</sup> and the Buddha approved of this (V 3:230 f).

As such, it is inexplicable that the Buddha should have allowed for the abrogation of the lesser and minor rules—which would be going against his own word! **The Milinda,pañha** discusses this possible dilemma: why did the Buddha promulgate the lesser and minor rules when he knows that he would allow them to be abolished after his passing; could it be then that he was not omniscient? Nāgasena replied that the Buddha had given the special allowance “to test the monks” (Miln 143).

**The Mahāsaṅghika Vinaya**, found in the Chinese translation, on the other hand, gives this interesting explanation:

Upāli tells the assembly:

“The Buddha told Ānanda thus: ‘When I am about to enter into nirvana, you should remind me so that I may abrogate the lesser and minor rules for the sake of the monks.’ But you did not tell him.”  
(Taishō 22.49bc)

The same text goes on to account that the recalcitrant “group of six monks” (*cha-b, baggiya bhikkhū*) were the avid proponents of the abolition of the lesser and minor rules, and were most disappointed when this did not occur (id).

Having considered these important reasons and explanations with regards to the Buddha’s allowance for the abrogation of the lesser and minor rules, it might be safely said that it is a late tradition interpolated into the Mahā Parinibbāna. In fact, Jotiya Dhirasekera suggests in connection with the stratification of the Vinaya Khandhakas,<sup>329</sup> it is possible that such discordant traditions could have been recorded “either out of choice or under pressure from within and without” (Dhirasekera 1981:170).

### **13 The Buddha’s last meal**

**(13a) WAS THE BUDDHA POISONED?** **The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) mentions two occasions of physical illness of the 80-year-old Buddha during his last days. **The first attack** is at Beluva (Bilva) [§2.23] during the rains retreat. However, realizing that it would be a calamity if he were to die there, the Buddha mindfully suppresses his illness, thinking: “It would not be fitting for me to attain parinirvana without having addressed my followers, and without having taken leave of the order of monks.” (D 2:99).

**The second attack** occurs after the Buddha has eaten the meal offered by Cunda the smith<sup>330</sup> at Pāvā (Skt Pāpā) (D 2:218). Again, for the same reason and using his mental powers, the Buddha suppresses the pain and illness, and continues his journey and teachings. Like **Socrates** who nobly drinks the hemlock deliberately prepared by his executioners without bearing them the slightest ill-will, the Buddha gracious-

<sup>328</sup> This is in fact the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 7 conditions of non-decline (*aparihāniya, dhammā*) [1.6b(3)].

<sup>329</sup> That is, the Cullavagga and the Mahāvagga (V vols 1-2), the historical sections of the Vinaya.

<sup>330</sup> In the suttas, **Cunda** is called a “smith” or “metal smith” (*kammāra, putta*). Comys however say that he is a worker in gold (*suvanṇa, kāra, putta*), a wealthy householder who has become a streamwinner at first sight of the Buddha, and builds a residence (*vihāra*) for the Buddha and the monks in his mango grove (DA 2:568; SnA 159; UA 399). This event evidently occurred before those of Mahā Parinibbāna S. The Aṅguttara has the relatively long **Cunda Kammāra,putta S** (A 10.176/5:263-268), where Cunda takes refuge.



ly eats his portion of the “pig’s delight” offered by Cunda the smith, but bids the others refrain, and the rest of it should be buried.<sup>331</sup>

Of course, there is no question of ill intent on Cunda’s part, but the Buddha is concerned lest the man feel guilty, and consoles him with the remark that Cunda should rather be praised, because “the Tathāgata gained final Nibbana after taking his last meal from you!” (D 16.4.42). Since neither man [Buddha or Socrates] feels that his impending death is an evil thing to be avoided, it is only natural for them not to resent the proximate causes, but the sensitivity with which they communicate this to the person responsible is indicative again of the compassion that characterizes both men. (Matthew Dillon, 2000:531)

Traditionally, it is said that the Buddha asks Cunda to bury the remainder of the *sūkara,maddava* because the gods have infused it with **divine essence** (*ojā/ūrjas*) as a tonic for the Buddha so that “no one in the world with its devas, Māras and Brahmās, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and people who, if they were to eat it, could thoroughly digest it except the Tathāgata.” (D 2:128; Bareau 1971:4).

In his notes, John Strong (2001:171) highlights the curious omission in the Pali account of an episode that is found in all the other versions of the Buddha’s last meal, that is, the mysterious and confused account of the “evil monk” who steals the bowl of food intended for the Buddha, thus forcing Cunda to prepare a second special meal, or who steals a bowl containing the leftovers of the meal (Bareau, 1970-71:258-264).

**The Milinda,pañha** discusses the dilemma confronting Cunda’s offering and the Buddha’s parinirvana, and concludes that

**The last offering of food** is of great advantage because of the Tathāgata’s attainment of *parinibbāna*. It was not because of the food that the illness fell upon the Blessed One but because of the **extreme weakness of his body and the proximity of death**. These two offerings of food were of great and incomparable merit because of the attainment of the nine successive dhyanas in forward and reverse order which the Tathāgata gained after partaking of that food.

(Miln 174-178; Miln:P 50 f. Pesala’s abr tr)

### (13b) SŪKARA,MADDAVA: WHAT KIND OF DISH WAS IT REALLY?

**1** After Bhoga,nagara, the Buddha and the order continue their last Dharma-tour together and arrive in **Pāvā** (Skt Pāpā), the town of the Mallas, across the Kakutṭha River from Kusinārā, to which it is connected by road. At Pāvā, the Buddha and the order stay at the mango grove of Cunda the smith, whose family prepare a sumptuous meal for them, abounding in “**pig’s delight**” (*sūkara,maddava*; Skt *sūkara,-mārdava*).<sup>332</sup> Apparently, the Buddha knows the nature of the “pig’s delight,” for he instructs that it only be served to him and the remainder is to be buried in a pit because, “Cunda, I can see no one in the world with its devas, Māra and Brahmā, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and people who, if they were to eat it, could thoroughly digest it except the Tathāgata.” (D 2:128)<sup>333</sup>

**2** Here, the pious commentarial traditions could not resist adding mythological colour to this important event in the Buddha’s life. The Sutta commentary remarks that “therein, the deities of the four great continents and the 2000 surrounding islands infused ambrosia (oja) into it.”<sup>334</sup> According to **the Milinda,pañha**, whenever the Buddha eats, deities, bearing ambrosia, would stand close by and infuse each morsel with it as he takes it out of his bowl (Miln 231). **The Milinda,pañha and the Sutta Nipāta Commentary** mention three similar occasions, that is, when the deities infuse ambrosia into the following food:

<sup>331</sup> See Matthew Dillon’s insightful comparison of the deaths of the two great men in “Dialogues with Death,” *Philosophy East and West* 50,4 Oct 2000:525-558.

<sup>332</sup> Cf D:W 571 n417.

<sup>333</sup> Cf Lamotte 1976:313 f.

<sup>334</sup> *Tattha pana dvi,sahassa,dīpa,parivāresu catūsu mahā,dīpesu devatā ojam pakkhipimsu* (DA 2;568).

- (1) Cunda's *sūkara,maddava* while it is cooking (D 2:127,21);
- (2) As the Blessed One takes morsel after morsel of food at Verañja, while he eats the steamed grains of dried-up barley (V 3:6),<sup>335</sup> and
- (3) The left-over sugar in Belaṭṭha Kaccāyana's sugar pot (V 1:225,17). (Miln 232; SnA 1:154)

The Milinda,pañha further mentions

- (4) Sujātā's gift of sweet rice-milk (J 1:68 f; DhA 1:85 f).<sup>336</sup>

The *sūkara,maddava* is apparently upsets the Buddha's stomach and he has a relapse of the dysentery he suffered earlier on at Beḷuva [§7]. Nevertheless, he bravely bears this new, less painful attack:

...the Lord was attacked by a serious illness with bloody diarrhoea, and with sharp pains as if he were about to die. But he endured all this mindfully and clearly aware, and without complaint. (D 2:128)

**Buddhaghosa** gives three alternative meanings of the Pāli term *sūkara,maddava*:

- (1) the flesh from a single first-born wild pig, neither too young nor too old, which had come to hand naturally, that is, without intentional killing;
- (2) a preparation of soft boiled rice cooked with the five cow-products (milk, cream, buttermilk, butter, ghee),<sup>337</sup>
- (3) a kind of alchemic elixir (*rasāyana*). (DA 2:568)

**Dhammapala**, in his commentary to Udāna 8.5 adds two more interpretations:

- (4) young bamboo shoots trampled by pigs (*sūkarehi maddita,vamṣa,kalira*);
- (5) mushrooms that arose at a spot where pigs had trampled upon. (UA 399)

In short, the ancient Commentators are not sure of the exact meaning of *sūkara,maddava*.

In the **Sarvastivadin account** of the Buddha's last days from the Chinese Āgama, there is no account of the kind of food the Buddha took, but in another version there is an addition after the statement about the meal:

Cunda had especially cooked sandal-mushrooms, which were looked upon all the world as a wonderful rarity, and offered these only to the Lord. The Lord said to Cunda, "Give not of these mushrooms to the monks." Cunda accepted the order, and did not venture to give them.<sup>338</sup>

This does not settle the question as to what the food really was, but only shows that the Chinese translator understood it in the same sense as some of the Pali Commentators (EJ Thomas, *The Quest for Enlightenment*, 1950:70).

**3 The PED** (sv "Sūkara"), in agreement with **RO Franke**, takes the term *sūkara,maddava* to be "soft (tender) boar' flesh" but Rhys Davids suggests "quantity of truffles," saying that it is important that the food prepared by Cunda and eaten by the Buddha is called *bhatta*, a term which is not used elsewhere of meat.<sup>339</sup> An ancient Chinese translation of the Sutta renders the term as "the stew of the ear of the sandalwood tree" (a kind of wood-fungus).

<sup>335</sup> According to late accounts, in Phussa Buddha's time, the Bodhisattva reviled monks for eating good food and told them to eat barley (*yava*) instead. As a result of this, he has to eat barley himself for 3 months (of the rains) at Verañja (Ap 1:300 f; UA 265).

<sup>336</sup> The two most meritorious almsgivings to the Buddha are (1) Sujātā's sweet milk-rice (last meal before the Great Awakening), and (2) Cunda's *sūkara,maddava* (just before the Great Parinirvana) (Miln 174-177; UA 405).

<sup>337</sup> V 1:244; DhA 1:158, 323, 397; SnA 322; VvA 147.

<sup>338</sup> Unlike the mycophobic Indians (they regarded mushroom and similar growths as being impure), the mycophilic Chinese (they love all kinds of edible mushrooms), have no difficulty in accepting that the Buddha's last meal comprises this delicacy.

<sup>339</sup> D:R 2:137,1; also Miln:R 1:244.1.

Some modern scholars tend to favour “truffles” (a kind of underground edible fungus) as the translation of *sūkara,maddava*, but this is not without its critics. The main problem is that it is a misnomer, as truffles are not found in Bihar. Furthermore, Trevor Ling, in his *The Buddha’s Philosophy of Man* (an unauthorized revision of Rhys Davids’ translation), comments on Rhys Davids’ footnote on *sūkara,maddava* (D:R 2:137 n31), thus:

This explanation seems intended to avoid offence to vegetarian readers or hearers. Rhys Davids’s statement that Buddhists “have been mostly vegetarians, and are increasingly so,” is difficult to accept. (1981:218 n31)

Walshe adds, in a charged note, saying:

Be that as it may (and in fact Eastern Theravāda Buddhists have rarely been vegetarians, though some are now, almost certainly under Western influence!), the question of vegetarianism has frequently been raised in the Buddhist field. (D:W 572 n417)

4 Although Rhys Davids notes that “it is important that the food prepared by Cunda and eaten by the Buddha is called *bhatta* [D 2:127]: this is not used elsewhere of meat” (D:R 2:137 n31), the term *bhatta* probably refers to the food offering as a whole (that is, including, but not only, the *sūkara,maddava*). Moreover, in reply to Devadatta’s proposal that the monks should take neither fish nor meat all life long, the Buddha declares that “fish and meat are pure in respect to three points: if one has not seen, heard or suspected (that they have been killed on purpose for one)” (V 2:197). In other words, vegetarianism is an option, not the rule, for the early Buddhist monastics.<sup>340</sup>

In the case of the **Ugga, the houselord of Vesālī** (A 5.44), the foremost of those who give pleasant gifts,<sup>341</sup> it is clear that amongst his gifts is “pork (*sūkara,mam̐sa*) with a generous serving of jujube fruit” (A:W 3:41n) which the Buddha accepts “out of compassion” (A 3:49). However, it should also be noted that the Pali text is only one of two texts, out of all the early sources (Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan) that *specifically* mention the kind of food prepared by Cunda for the Buddha.<sup>342</sup>

Furthermore, the Buddha,vaṃsa Commentary gives a list of “30 points common to all the Buddhas” (*sama,timsa,vidhā dhammatā*), where item 29 says that “On the day of his final nirvana, he takes a meal that tastes of meat (*mam̐sa,rasa,bhojana*)” (BA 298). If we accept this tradition, it we are more certain that the Buddha’s last meal is a pork dish.

5 In 1958, **R Gordon Wasson and Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty** published a ground-breaking paper simply entitled, “The last meal of the Buddha,” the kind of which any Buddhist who love suttas would exult in and feel a sense of gratitude to these scholars. We might say that the mystery of the Buddha’s final meal is finally solved, according to the scholars at least. **Stella Kramrisch**, building on the work of **Roger Heim** and Gordon Wasson in eastern India, had identified with finality that *sūkara,maddava* is the *pūtika*, a plant that figures prominently in the Brāhmaṇas and other early post-Vedic sacred Sanskrit texts (Kramrisch 1975).

Now, the word *sūkara,maddava* is itself an anomaly, almost a hapax (appearing only once), that is, only in **the Mahā,parinibbāna** [§4.18-19] and excerpts from it (like **the Cunda Kammāra,putta Sutta**, U 8.5). For the main dish of such an important meal—the Buddha’s last—it is simply perplexing that the Commentaries are not really sure what it exactly is: pork stew, rich milk-rice, or alchemic elixir (DA 568); bamboo shoots, or mushrooms (UA 399)?<sup>343</sup> Some scholars think that the explanations for *sūkara,maddava* was likely to have been introduced late in Asoka’s reign (3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE), and the word itself might have been a neologism “invented ad hoc.”<sup>344</sup> In short, we can at least say that the Buddha’s last meal is highly unlikely to have been a pork dish.

<sup>340</sup> For a discussion on the meatless diet, see **Āmagandha S** (Sn 2.2) = SD 4.24 Introd.

<sup>341</sup> A 5.44/1:25.

<sup>342</sup> For a discussion on the Buddha’s last meal and references, see John S Strong, *The Buddha: A short biography*, 2001:134-135.

<sup>343</sup> For a long list of refs on scholars who discussed the identity of this mysterious dish, see Gordon Wasson & Flaherty 1982:591 n1.

<sup>344</sup> Gordon Wasson & Flaherty 1982:600.

**Stella Kramrisch**, in her researches, was able to identify the Sanskrit *pūtika* as a surrogate for the Vedic *soma*,<sup>345</sup> which was abandoned shortly after 1000 BCE due to difficulty in obtaining it.<sup>346</sup> In its place, *pūtika* (Santali *putka*),<sup>347</sup> a kind of mushroom found in Bihar was used. Further, we need to note that brahmins and higher-class members abhorred mushrooms. The reasons were probably simple enough. Mushrooms tend to grow in rotting matter (such as trunks and cow-dung), and, as for *pūtika* (which means “having a rotting smell”), they must be eaten within hours of harvest, before they stink of rotting flesh!<sup>348</sup>

**6** Now, **Cunda the metal smith** was the person who made the last meal-offering to Buddha. Some scholars contend that Cunda, being a shudra (a menial working class member), probably did not know about the aversion of the social elites to mushrooms, that is, *pūtika*. Since it was in season and a delicacy in that area, what better offering could Cunda make to the Buddha who was going to pass away soon. In fact, it is possible that Cunda had made a special preparation of the *pūtika* as a sort of elixir, hoping that it would lengthen the Buddha’s life (UA 400).

The Buddha, realizing that such a meal of mushrooms might offend the high-caste monks (clearly not awakened saints here) with such a dish, told Cunda to serve only him (the Buddha) with it, and to bury the rest in a pit. It is likely that the *pūtika* were already spoiling<sup>349</sup> and giving off a strong smell; hence, they should be buried in the ground.

As the Buddha already had an earlier attack of dysentery at Beḷuva [§2.23], such a meal caused him a relapse. However, it did not kill him. He had already made a prediction of his death. Apparently, such predictions of impending death by a saint was (and is) not uncommon, as it belongs the ancient Indian tradition of *mahā,samādhi* or “great samadhi,” where the saint would voluntarily pass away in deep meditation.<sup>350</sup> [9f]

Of course, all this is hypothetical, but based on careful research. It certainly brings us closer to understanding how native diets are linked with their religions. A more historical understanding of how the Buddha lived, ate and died, is instructive in our accepting him as a human being who is able to transcend both humanity and divinity into an unconditioned state of spiritual freedom. It reminds us that despite our frailties, we are capable of rising above ourselves.

## 14 Dhamm’ārāma

A short but inspiring episode is found in **the Dhammapada Commentary** in connection with the Buddha’s statement on the “supreme worship” [§5.3b]. The Dhammapada story opens in this manner:

From the day when the Teacher announced, “Four months [*sic*] hence I shall pass into parinirvana,” monks by the thousands spent their time attending to the Teacher and following him around. Those worldly monks wept. They who had destroyed their mental influxes, felt Dharma-samvega. But all went about in groups, saying, “What shall we do?”<sup>351</sup> (DhA 4:93)

But, one monk, by the name of Dhamm’ārāma (Skt Dharm’ārāma), which means “one who delights in the Dharma,” kept to himself. And when they asked him, he gave them no answer. He thought to him-

<sup>345</sup> Identified as the entheogenic (previously, hallucinogenic) mushroom, *Amanita muscaria* or fly agaric. See Gordon Wasson & O’Flaherty 1958:600 f, 603.

<sup>346</sup> See Gordon Wasson & O’Flaherty 1982:596.

<sup>347</sup> Santali is the dialect of the Santal, who number in some millions, living in villages scattered in the Santal Parganas, in eastern Bihar, in the western north-south strip of West Bengal, and in Orissa as far south as the Simlipal Hills. See Gordon Wasson & O’Flaherty 1958:594 f.

<sup>348</sup> By the beginning of the Common Era, **the Manu,smṛti** (Laws of Manu), chs 4-5 listed “garlic, leeks, onions, mushrooms and whatever that arises from filth are unfit to be consumed by the twice-born.”

<sup>349</sup> It should be remembered that Cunda, family and assistants spends *the whole night* preparing for the meal [§4.17].

<sup>350</sup> See eg Sushila Blackman 1997.

<sup>351</sup> *Satthārā kira “ito me catu,mās’accayena parinibbānam bhavissatī ti ārocitre aneka,sahassā bhikkhū satthāram parivāretvā vicarimsu. Tattha puthujjanā bhikkhū assūni sandhāretum nāsakkhimsu, khīṇāsavānam dhamma,-samvego uppajji. Sabbe’pi “kin nu kho karissāmī ti vagga,bandhanena vicaranti.*

self: “The Teacher has announced that four months hence he will pass away into nirvana, and I have not yet freed myself from the bondage of desire. Therefore so long as the Teacher remains alive, I will struggle and attain arhathood.”

The monks reported Dharm’ārāma’s aloofness to the Buddha and he was summoned. When the Buddha asked him if it was true that he was being aloof, Dharm’ārāma explained that he was trying hard to attain arhathood while the Buddha was yet alive and before he passed away into parinirvana. The Buddha applauded him.

Bhikshus, every other monk should show his affection to me just as Dhamm’ārāma has done. For they honour me with garlands, perfumes and the like, honour me not; but they that practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, they alone truly honour me. (DhA 4:94)

Having said that, the Buddha pronounced the following Dhammapada stanza

The monk who dwells delighting in the Dharma,  
Who reflects on the Dharma,  
Who remembers the Dharma,  
Does not fall away from the True Dharma. (Dh 364)

At the conclusion of the discourse, Dharm’ārāma was established in arhathood, and the assembly, too, profited from the discourse.

It is curious that the Dhammapada story mentions that the Buddha’s announcement of his impending parinirvana is made “four months” instead of three month before the Parinirvana (as mentioned in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta). There are two possibilities: the Buddha had made an earlier announcement, or the Dhammapada Commentary (Buddhaghosa) errs.

## 15 Aspects of (*pari*)nirvāna

It should be noted that *parinirvāna* as used throughout this Sutta refer to the Buddha’s “final passing away.” This passing away is “final” in that there is no more rebirth for the Buddha (or any fully awakened being). However, the term *parinirvana* is not always used in this sense. The oldest Pali texts<sup>352</sup> mention two aspects of *nibbāna/nirvāna* and of *parinibbāna/parinirvāna*, where both the terms—*nirvāna* and *parinirvāna*—are identical in meaning. Partly due to the usage of the term *parinibbāna* in this Sutta, where it describes the Buddha’s final passing away—the “final nirvana”—the term is often associated (exclusively) with the “death” of the Buddha or an arhat.<sup>353</sup> Moreover, Rhys Davids’ Pali-English Dictionary perpetuates this error.<sup>354</sup> **EJ Thomas**<sup>355</sup> remarks that “Even the Buddhists of Ceylon have the same idea [that *parinirvāna* means final *nirvāna* or *nirvāna* attained at death with the complete dispersal of the *skandhas*], probably because they follow Rhys Davids [ie the Pali Text Society’s *Pali-English Dictionary*] more closely than the Pali texts.”

Some scholars have also endorsed this error: **AK Warder**,<sup>356</sup> for example, says that “The prefix *pari* is generally used when referring not to *nirvāna* itself as a state, but to the event of an individual’s (final) attainment of it at the end of his worldly life.” Modern scholars like FUJITA Kōtatsu,<sup>357</sup> KR Norman, Bhikkhu Bodhi<sup>358</sup> and Jan Nattier<sup>359</sup> are well aware of this problem. **KR Norman** disagrees with Warder

<sup>352</sup> Cf DhA 2:163.

<sup>353</sup> KR Norman, “Mistaken Ideas about *Nibbāna*.” In *The Buddhist Forum* 3, ed Skorupski & Pagel, London, 1995:216. This section is a summary of the salient points in this insightful article.

<sup>354</sup> PED 427, under Parinibbāna.

<sup>355</sup> EJ Thomas. “Nirvāna and Parinirvāna,” in *India Antiqua* (Festschrift for Jean Philippe Vogel), Leiden, 1947: 294 f. See also R. Gombrich, *Precepts and Practice*, Oxford, 1971:70 n14.

<sup>356</sup> AK Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, London, 1963:49 n1.

<sup>357</sup> FUJITA Kōtatsu, “Genshi bukyō ni okeru nehan—*nibbāna* to *parinibbāna*.” *Indogaku bukyōgaku kenkyū* 1988 37,1:1-12.

<sup>358</sup> S:B 1:49-52.

<sup>359</sup> Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men*, Honolulu, 2003:148 n26.



and prefers Thomas' view, but agreeing that "the difference between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* is a grammatical one." (1995:216 f.)

[EJ Thomas] clarified the relationship between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* long ago, referring<sup>360</sup> to E Kuhn's explanation [untraced] that "*pari* compounded with a verb converts the verb from the expression of a state to the expression of the achievement of an action." He states, "***Nirvāṇa* is the state of release; *parinirvāṇa* is the attaining of that state.** The monk *parinirvāṇi* 'attains *nirvāṇa*' at the time of enlightenment as well as at death"....

Thomas...elaborated the same explanation,<sup>361</sup> "He *parinibbāyati*, attains the state, and then *nibbāyati*, is in the state expressed by *nibbāna*." (KR Norman, 1995:217; my emphasis)

"It is clear, therefore, that the difference between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* is not that of *nibbāna* in life and *parinibbāna* at death" (Norman, 1995:216).

Later, medieval scholars expanded the usages of the term *parinibbāna*. Buddhaghosa, in his Dīgha Commentary, for example, speak of three kinds of parinirvāṇa connected with the Buddha, namely, that of the defilements (*kilesa parinibbāna*), that of the aggregates [literally, "groups" of aggregates]<sup>362</sup> (*khandha parinibbāna*), and that of his bodily relics (*dhātu parinibbāna*) (DA 899 f).<sup>363</sup> The first, also known as "nirvana with remnants of clinging" (*sopādi, sesa nibbāna*), according to Buddhaghosa, took place under the Bodhi tree during the Awakening (It 41). The second, or "nirvana without remnants of clinging" (*nirupādi, sesa nibbāna*) (It 41; A 4.116), is the parinirvana at Kusinārā (a view, as have seen, differing from that of the early texts).<sup>364</sup> The third kind of *parinirvāṇa* refers to the end of the Dispensation, that is, the final disappearance of the Buddha's Teaching.<sup>365</sup>

The Pali term *upādi* ("clinging," from *upa* + *ā* + *dā* "to take") is often confused with the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *upādhi* (meaning "remnant, substrate," or better, "birth-basis" or "accumulation," attachment to which leads to rebirth).<sup>366</sup> Despite the subtle but important difference in meaning, most modern commentators regard them as synonymous, and do not try to explain how and why the difference arose. (Norman 1995:215)<sup>367</sup>

## 16 Political conditions

**(16a) THE 16 GREAT STATES (MAHĀ, JANAPADA).** Now we will look at the general political conditions of north central India (especially the Gangetic Basin). The territorial organization of the state is often described as comprising villages (*gāma*), market towns (*nigama*), the countryside (*janapada*), the city (*nagara*), and the frontier (*paccanta*). The frontier's security was often a matter of anxiety for the rulers as it was often in a state of unrest. A "village" (*gāma*) ranged from a single household of an extended family to several hundred households of many families, whose main occupation were agriculture, arts and crafts for manufacturing tools. A "market town" (*nigama*), here generally referred to a trading village or town, whose main activity was the bartering or sales of commodities.<sup>368</sup>

| Country/State | Capital & towns | Modern districts |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|

<sup>360</sup> EJ Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, London, 1933:121 n4.

<sup>361</sup> EJ Thomas. "Nirvāṇa and Parinirvāṇa," 1971:294 f.

<sup>362</sup> The Groups here comprises those of form, feeling, perception, dispositions, and consciousness. See n1.

<sup>363</sup> Cf DhA 2:163 where 2 kinds of *parinibbāna* are distinguished.

<sup>364</sup> Norman: "The Buddha was a tathāgata; he had attained *nibbāna*, but he was still alive and with his followers, ie the attainment of this state made no obvious difference to his physical state. Perhaps it was as the result of difficulties such as this that the idea of two *nibbānas* arose" (1991:2 = 1993:253). See Thomas 1933:131 f.

<sup>365</sup> On the disappearance of the Dharma, see Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:6.22.

<sup>366</sup> See SD 28.11 Intro (3.2).

<sup>367</sup> See **The Unconscious** = SD 17.8b(4.4).

<sup>368</sup> See Gokhale 1994:51 f, 125; Chakravarti 1987:19, 22 f.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Aṅga  | <b>Campā</b> (Bhagalpur)<br>Bhadrikā (P: Bhaddiyā)<br>Aśvapura (P: Assapura)  | Bengal   |
| 2. <b>Magadha</b>                                    | <b>Rājagrha</b> or Girivraja (Rajgir)   | Southern Bihar   |
| 3. Kāśī (P Kāśī)                                     | <b>Vārāṇasī</b> (Banaras)   | Banaras/Vārāṇasī   |
| 4. <b>Kośala</b>                                     | <b>Śrāvastī</b> (Saheth Maheth)<br><b>Sāketa</b> (Ayodhyā)                    | Oudh   |
| 5. Vṛjī (P Vajjī)                                    | <b>Vaiśālī</b> (Besarh) of the Licchavis<br>Mithilā (Janakpur) of the Videhas | Northern Bihar   |
| 6. Malla ( <i>Malloi</i> )                           | Pāvā (Padaraona)<br>Kuśinagara (P: Kusinārā; modern Kasia)                    | Gorakhpur  |
| 7. Caitya (P Ceḍī)                                   | Śuktimati<br>Sahajati<br>Tripurī  | Bundelkhand (Vindhya region,<br>northern Madhya Pradesh) |
| 8. <b>Vatsā (P Vaṃsā)</b>                            | <b>Kauśāmbī</b> (P: Kosambī; modern Kosam)                                    | Allahābād  |
| 9. Kuru  | Indraprastha (Delhi)<br>Hastinapura   | District of Thānesar,<br>Delhi & Meerut                  |
| 10. Pañcāla  | N. Ahicchatra (Rāmnagar)<br>S. Kāmpilya (Kampil)                              | Rohilkhand, central Doāb                                 |
| 11. Matsya (P Maccha)                                | Virāṭa (Bairāt)   | Jaipur   |
| 12. Śūrasena (P Śūrasena)                            | Mathurā   | Mathurā (Muttra)   |
| 13. Aśmaka or Aśvaka (P Assaka) ( <i>Assakenus</i> ) | Potali or Potana (Bodhan)   | Nizam  |
| 14. <b>Avantī*</b>                                   | Ujjayinī (Ujjain), (P: Ujjenī)<br>Māhiṣmati                                   | Mālwā & Nimār  |
| 15. Gandhārā or Yonā*                                | Takṣaśilā (P: Takka,silā)   | District of Peshāwār & Rawalpiṇḍī                        |
| 16. Kambojā  |   | SW Kaśmīr & Kāfirstān                                    |

(A 1:213 = 4:252 f. = Nc 247) [See Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 1988a:8]

Names in *italics*, eg *Malloi*, are those found in ancient Greek writings. An asterisk (\*), eg “Avantī\*,” denotes that it is outside the Middle Country (**about the size of Malaysia**, or England and Wales).

During the 8<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, north central India was going through economic growth and urbanization, as reflected in the terms, *mahā janapada* and *janapada*. The term *janapada* assumed a new broader meaning and connotes “both a territory and its people and may be translated as a realm, state, domain, nation, geopolitical region, or simply region.”<sup>369</sup> Of these regions, sixteen of them—the *mahā janapada* or “great states”—wield significant political power or sovereignty. Most of these great states are mentioned in the Pali Canon and Commentaries (compiled in Sri Lanka),<sup>370</sup> and also mentioned in earlier sources, such as the Late Vedic texts or the Jain sources or both.

Some of these sixteen great states (*soḷasā mahā, janapadā*), such as **Kāśī**, **Kosala**, **Kuru-Pañcāla**, **Maccha** (Skt **Matsya**), **Gandhārā** and **Kambojā**, had existed long before and were mentioned on the Vedic literature. The rest, such as Aṅga, Magadha, Vajjī (Skt Vṛjī), Malla, Ceḍī, Vaṃsā (Skt Vatsā), Śūrasena, Assaka (Skt Aśmaka) and Avantī, were new states that arose from declining old ones or new

<sup>369</sup> Schwartzberg 1992:166.

<sup>370</sup> On the contents of the Pali Canon and Commentaries, see the Textual Conventions (SD Epilegomena). On the formation and nature of the Pali Canon, see KR Norman, *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*, 1997. The Canon and the earliest Commentaries may have reached Sri Lanka by the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent BCE. Between then and the 1<sup>st</sup> cent CE, they were translated into Sinhalese, and others were written in that language. In the 5<sup>th</sup> cent the greatest of the commentators, Buddhaghosa, reworked into Pali much of the earlier material, adding Dravidian commentaries and Sinhalese traditions. Within a century or two, others, notably Dhammapāla (south India), produced similar works on parts of the Canon that Buddhaghosa had not covered. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahajanapadas>.

areas coming into prominence. By the time of the Buddha, most of these regions were settled cultural entities in the face of dynamic political developments.

The crucial element in this process [the evolution and development of regional identities of peoples and the growth of regional powers] was the permanent settlement of various tribes, clans, colonizing families, and individual cultural regions. These were designated according to a variety of criteria: after the name of the tribe (eg, Kamboja, Gandhāra, Malla), after branches of tribes or clans (eg the Vaṁsa of the Kuru), after the confederate character of the tribes (eg, Kuru-Pañcāla and Vajjī), or after the name of some original colonizing hero (eg, Videha, Aṅga).

(Schwartzberg 1992:166)

**(16b) MONARCHIES AND CONFEDERACIES.** There were two forms of political regions in the Middle Country.<sup>371</sup> Monarchies formed the central regions, while the oligarchic republics were generally found on the periphery of the Middle Country.

Among the reasons for the change from kingdoms to oligarchies was opposition to the increasing demands of the king for obedience, taxation, and other property contributions and of the entrenched Brahman priesthood for conformity to hierarchical, rather than egalitarian, sociocultural institutions and support of sacrificial religion. Moreover, religious sacrifices involving the slaughter of animals were injurious to the expanding cultivation economy of the Ganga Plain, in which cattle were needed as draft animals. Pastoralism, by contrast, was declining. Food preferences were changing in the direction of vegetarianism, and so cattle sacrifices were no longer desire for communal feasting.

The role of the northeastern republics is particularly significant in that they gave vent to their opposition to monarchical authoritarianism and priestly orthodoxy by espousing Buddhism, Jainism, and other heterodox sects that grew within their milieu and that advanced democratic social organization.

(Schwartzberg 1992:167)

Late in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Kosala, Magadha, Vaṁsā and Avantī were the four great monarchies, and together with the republican Vajjī confederacy, composed the major regional powers of the Middle Country (*Majjhima, desa*, Skt *Madhya, deśa*) and the “Southern Route” (Skt *Dakṣiṇā, patha*, or modern Deccan). The Ikṣvāku (related to the P *Okkāka*)<sup>372</sup> kings of Kosala, by ceding Kāsī, initiated a new process of territorial expansion

...marked by the organization of a regular army, usually under the command of the crown prince or a subordinate chieftain. This process reached its climax under the Magadhan kings, whose administrative machinery rivalled their highly developed military organization, enabling them to triumph in the struggle for empire that lasted about one hundred years in the central Ganga Plain.

(Schwartzberg 1992:166; see esp plate XIV.1 map(a))

As such, around or just before the Buddha’s time, a process of integration<sup>373</sup> was slowly gathering momentum amongst the great states (*mahā janapadā*), as is revealed in the pairing of their names in

<sup>371</sup> See Schwartzberg 1992: plates III.B.1-4.

<sup>372</sup> Okkāka is mentioned in such suttas as **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 1:15 f/1:92) and **Brāhmaṇa, dhammika S** (Sn 284-315/52 ff); see also DA 1:258; AA 438, 4:69. “Although the Sanskritised form of the Pāli name is Ikṣvāku, it is unlikely that Okkāka is identical with the famous Ikṣvāku of the *Purāṇas*, the immediate son of Manu, son of the Sun. The Pāli is evidently more primitive, as is shown by the form Okkākukha, and the name Ikṣvāku looks like a deliberate attempt at accommodation to the Purānic account” (DPPN 462). See Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, 1949:5-7.

<sup>373</sup> “Ironically, the contradiction between the republican way of life on the one hand and monarchy on the other was resolved in the emergence of the universal and autocratic empire of Magadha with its bureaucratic approach to regional integration. The new synthesis was consummated through a systematized land revenue policy and the promulgation, under Aśoka, of a universal moral code. The former regulated local property arrangements and sublimat-

Buddhist sources, for example, Kuru-Pañcāla, Kāsi-Kosala, Malla-Vajjī, Aṅga-Magadha, Cedi-Vamsa and Maccha-Sūrasena. Similarly, Avantī was recognized as having two divisions at Ujjayinī and Māhis-matī. As these states were merging, old monarchies began to decline internally. Some, such as Kuru and Pañcāla reverted to their previous form of oligarchic confederation (*saṅgha,raja*, Skt *saṅgha.rājya*). At the same time, new authoritarian monarchies (such as that of Ajāta,sattu, r 494-461) gained ascendancy.

The India of Buddha's time was one of dynamic social changes with powerful monarchies displacing the old tribal confederacies. An agrarian village-based economy was being taken over by the growth of large towns and cities as mercantile and military bases. With the rise of cities, work and occupation became more specialized and people had more leisure. Such concentration of people with more free time and surplus income encouraged them in exchanges of ideas and the search for meaning in the social uprootedness.

It is significant that none of the *gaṇa,saṅgha* or tribal republic (such as the Sakyas) are listed amongst the sixteen great countries. While the monarchies (*āṇā,cakka*) were politically better organized, hence more stable, these republics had simpler socio-economic organization, and did not produce a wide range of goods. "But a more important reason for none of the cities of the *gaṇa-saṅghas* being listed as a *mahā-nagara* was that the *gaṇa-saṅghas* were suffering from problems of internal collapse." (Chakravarti 1987: 21 f). With such combined social, economic and political factors, understandably the Buddha's teaching of *dukkha* or existential angst captured the attention of many of his day.

**(16c) RĀJAGAHA AND PĀṬALIPUTRA.** From the little that we know for certain of the early Magadha empire, its early rise and growth appear to have begun with the conquest of Aṅga and control of the rich mineral (especially iron) and forest resources and the trade routes of the sea. Her military success was largely due to the use of elephants, the backbone of their military might.

The fortifications of the Magadha capital, **Rājagaha**, were the strongest amongst the Magadha towns, but **Pāṭaliputta**—in the Buddha's time, a town (*nagara*) called Pāṭali,gāma [§1.19]—was better located for further conquests and for effective control of the Ganges Plain and its growing trade. **Pāṭali,gāma** was a fortified village standing on the south bank of the Ganges between Rājagaha and Vesālī, that is, on the borders between Magadha and Vajjī country. Ajātasattu's plans to expand Magadha to the north and west, however, was for a time prevented by the formidable Vajjī confederacy and its allies, the Mallas, together with their Kosala overlords.

To further his military plans, Ajātasattu fortified Pāṭali,gāma and launched a series of ruthless and unscrupulous subversion of the enemy's strength before going into open war.<sup>374</sup> The Vajjīs were conquered after a protracted struggle, and a Magadhan minister controlled the recourses from Vesālī. The Mallas, too, were conquered in the same manner. After conquering Kosala and its dependencies including Kāsi, Magadha became the master of the central Ganges Plain. It was almost the richest, most populous and most technologically advanced area of India then.

Its control of prosperous and strongly fortified cities, trade routes, and navigation facilities, and its succession to the legacy of southern political and economic dominance from both Kāsi and Kosala, raised Magadha to paramount status in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BC. This achievement was due to the successful Magadhan practice of *Realpolitik*, to their relatively advanced political and military machinery, and to their keen appreciation of the nature of local political constraints.

(Schwartzberg 1992:167 )

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ed kinship identities, while the latter stressed individual or family social and moral responsibility." (Schwartzberg 1992:167)

<sup>374</sup> See eg Vassakāra's spy mission into Vajjī country and sabotage of the republic [1.1 n].



Source: <http://www.aimwell.org/Photos/India/india.html>





### On the use of Sanskrit names

The notes of the translation sometimes uses Sanskrit names, sometimes given as Pali/Sanskrit. The Sanskrit names have been used in a previous essay and I have retained them partly to avoid the tedium of changing them into their Pali cognates, partly so that new readers will have some idea of Sanskrit names. Moreover, the Indian Buddhist terms that are found in modern dictionaries are all in their Sanskrit forms.

# The Discourse on The Great Parinirvana

D 16/2:72-167

## Chapter 1

(First Recital, *paṭhama bhāṇavāra*)

1 [72] Thus have I heard :

1.1a At one time the Blessed One was staying on Mount Vulture Peak at Rājagaha.<sup>375</sup>

### MAGADHA

#### Ajāta,sattu

1.1b Now at that time,<sup>376</sup> the rajah Ajāta,sattu Vedehi,putta<sup>377</sup> of Magadha,<sup>378</sup> wished to wage war against the Vajjīs.<sup>379</sup> He said thus:

“These Vajjīs, powerful and glorious as they may be, I shall uproot them, I shall destroy them, I shall bring upon them loss and misfortune!”<sup>380</sup>

1.2 Then, the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha addressed the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha,<sup>381</sup> thus:

<sup>375</sup> Mahā,parinibbāna S opens with the Buddha staying on Mt Vulture’s Peak (Gijjha,kūṭa/Gr̥dhra,kūṭa) at **Rāja-gr̥ha**, the capital of Magadha and one of the six main cities of India (D 2:147). It has been identified as modern Rajgir in the Nalanda district of Bihar about 21 km (13 miles) southwest of Bihar-Sarif. Its southern flank is protected by five hills: Vebhāra (Vaibhāra), Vepulla (Vaipulya), Isigili (R̥ṣi,gi), Paṇḍava (Pāṇḍava) and Gijjha,kūṭa (Gr̥dhra,kūṭa). As evident from **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108), it is probable that king Ajātasattu was fortifying Rājagaha around this time (or earlier) because he is worried that king Caṇḍa Pajjota of Avantī might attack him (M 108.2/3:7). The sutta Comy says Ajātasattu, knew that Pajjota was Bimbisāra’s good friend and was worried that Pajjota might avenge Bimbisāra’s death at his hands by attacking him (MA 4:71). On the middle country and the 16 great states, see Intro (16a). On this following episode, see M Pye, *The Buddha*, 1979:63-71 (ch 7).

<sup>376</sup> This would probably be about a year before the Buddha’s parinirvana.

<sup>377</sup> **Vedehī,putta** (Skt Vaidehī,putra, Avds̄ 1.57.2 ff). Ajāta,sattu (Skt Ajāta,śatru) (r 494-461) was called *Vaidehi,putra* because his mother was from Videha, whose capital was Mithilā. But Buddhaghosa explains that *Vedehī* here refers to a “wise woman” and not the “Videha lady,” since his mother is the daughter, not of a Videha king, but a Kosala king (J 3:121, 4:342). The Jātakas know her as Kosala,devī, the daughter of Mahā Kośala and sister of Pasenadi (Skt Prasenajit) (J 2:273, 403, 3:121 f). For details, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2) = SD 8.10 Intro (4).

<sup>378</sup> Magadha was separated from Aṅga by the Campā river, and its territory extended westward to the Son river, corresponding approximately to the present Patnā and Gayā districts of South Bihar. See Finegan 1989:85-90.

<sup>379</sup> Ajātasattu, having come into power, decides to conquer the Licchavīs of Vesālī/Vaiśālī and the Vajjī/Vr̥jī confederacy (especially the Licchavīs of Vaiśālī and the Mallas of Kusinārā/Kuśinagarī and Pāvā/Pāpā). Before embarking on his venture, Ajāta,sattu wishes to know what outcome the Buddha would foresee. Consequently, he despatches his chief minister, the brahmin Vassakāra/Varṣakāra, to consult the Buddha. On the political condition of India at that time, see Intro (16b).

<sup>380</sup> **Vassakāra S** (A 7.20/4:17-21) relates how Ajāta,sattu applies his cunning through his chief minister, Vassa,kāra, who pretends that he has barely escaped with his life from Ajātaśatru. Having been given refuge and hospitality at Vesālī, Vassa,kāra lived there for three years, secretly sowing dissension amongst the Vajjīs. However, it was only after 16 years that the Vr̥jīs finally fell under his sway. Since then, the most important Vajjī tribe, **the Licchavīs**, remained subdued for many centuries until the 4th century CE, when they would regain their power under the Imperial Guptas, with Candragupta I marrying Kumāra,devī, a daughter of the Licchavīs and becoming the mother of Samudragupta (DA 99; JASB 17 1921:269-271). For details, see Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples* (2004) ch 8 “The Thundering Silence” §9b.

<sup>381</sup> **Vassa,kāra**, often paired with Sunīdha: see §1.26. “Chief minister,” *mahāmatta* (cf Skt *mahā,mātra*) = *mahā āmacca*? PED: “A king’s chief minister [evidently more than one of them]: he is the prime minister ‘who was the highest Officer-of-State and real Head of the Executive’ (Banerjea, *Public Administration in Ancient India*, 1916).

“Brahmin, go to the Blessed One and bow your head at the Blessed One’s feet on my behalf, and ask after his health, that he has good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and comfort,<sup>382</sup> saying thus:

‘Bhante, the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha bows his head at the Blessed One’s feet, and asks after your health, that you have good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and comfort.’ Then say: ‘The rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha, desires to wage war against the Vajjīs. He says thus: “These Vajjīs, powerful and glorious as they may be, I shall uproot them, I shall destroy them, I shall bring upon them loss [73] and misfortune!”’

And whatever the Blessed One should answer you, bear it well in mind and report to me—for the Tathāgata [Thus Come] does not speak falsely.”

**1.3** “Yes, sire,” the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, replied to the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha.

Then, having ordered a number of magnificent state carriages, he mounted one of them, and leaving Rājagaha, headed for Mount Vulture Peak.

He went in his carriage as far as the ground would permit, dismounted and went up to the Blessed One, and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, said this to the Blessed One:

“Master Gotama,<sup>383</sup> the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha, bows his head at the Blessed One’s feet, and asks after your health, that you have good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and comfort, and the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha, desires to wage war against the Vajjīs. He says thus: “These Vajjīs, powerful and glorious as they may be, I shall uproot them, I shall destroy them, I shall bring upon them loss and misfortune!”’

### The seven conditions for a nation’s welfare<sup>384</sup>

**1.4** At that time, the venerable Ānanda was standing behind the Blessed One, fanning him.<sup>385</sup> Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda thus:

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His position is of such importance, that he even ranges as a *rājā* or king: V 3:47 (*rājā...akkhadassā mahāmattā ye vā pana chejjabhejjam anusāsanti ete rājāno nāma*). — Note. An acc sg *mahā-mattānam* we find at A 1:154 (formed after the prec *rājānam*). See V 1:74 (where 2 ranks of *mahāmacca* are given: *senā-nāyaka* ~a the minister of defence, and *vohārika* ~a those of law); also D 1:7, 3:88, 3:64 (here with ep *khattiya*): A 1:154, 252, 279, 3:128; V 4:-224; Vism 1:21; VbhA 312 (in simile of 2 ~ā), 340; PvA 169. Cf Fick, *Sociale Gliederung* 92, 99, 101.” See also VA 2:294, 5:1095; DA 2:540. Below, Vassakāra is mentioned with Sunīdha [1.26]. On Vassa,kāra, see **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108) @ SD 33.5 (1.2.4).

<sup>382</sup> *App’ābādham app’ātāṅkam lahu-ṭṭhānam balaṃ phāsu,vihāraṃ...puccha*, lit “ask (if) he is free from sickness, free from illness, in a state of lightness, having strength, dwelling in comfort.” This is stock: D 1 204, 2:72; M 2:91, 108, 125, 141.

<sup>383</sup> Note that **Vassa,kāra** addresses the Buddha as *bho Gotama*, in a manner different from Ajātasattu’s instruction (where *bhante* is used). Evidently, **Vassa,kāra** shows only nominal respect to the Buddha. See §1.29n. The Majjhima Comy (to the Gopaka Moggallāna S, M 108) has a curious story about Vassakāra: once, seeing Mahā Kaccāna descending Mt Vulture Peak, he remarks that Mahā Kaccāna looked just like a monkey. Hearing this, the Buddha remarks that unless Vassakāra asks for the elder’s forgiveness, he would be born as a monkey in Veḷu,vana. Vassa,kāra, fearing the Buddha’s prophecy coming true, had various fruit trees and other trees planted in Veḷu,vana, to be of use to him as a monkey. After his death, he was actually reborn as a monkey who answered to the name Vassa,kāra! (MA 4:73)

<sup>384</sup> The traditional texts (such as the CSCD) call this section *rāja aparahāniya,dharmā*, “the king’s conditions for non-decline.” See Intro (10a) above.

<sup>385</sup> The Pali Canon records are at least six instances of a monk fanning the Buddha: (1) Nāga,samāla (**Mahā Siha-nāda S**, M 12.64/1:83); (2) Sāriputta (**Dīgha,nakha S**, M 74.14/ 1:501 f); (3) Ānanda (2 instances): **Mahā,parinib-bāna S** (D 16.1.4/2:73) & **Vassakāra S** (A 7.20.2/4:18); (4) Upavāṇa (2 instances): **Pāsādika S** (D 29) mentions Upavāṇa fanning the Buddha, ie, just after the Buddha has given Cunda Samaṇ’uddesa an instruction on the 4 sati-patthanas (D 29.41/3:141), which is probably on a different occasion from the instance reported in **Mahā Parinib-bāna S** (D 16.5.4/2:138), when again he fans the dying Buddha. Comy says that although the Buddha is fanned, he feels neither warm nor cold (AA 4:14). Analayo notes that while the Majjhima rarely mention a monk fanning the Buddha, the Madhyama Āgama (in Chinese tr) regularly depicts the Buddha being fanned, eg MĀ 33 = T1.474a19 ||

(1) “What now, Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjīs gather regularly and that their gatherings [assemblies] are well attended?”

“Bhante, I have heard that the Vajjīs gather regularly and that their gatherings are well attended.”

“Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs gather regularly and that their gatherings are well attended, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

(2) What now, Ānanda, [74] have you heard that the Vajjīs assemble in fellowship, disperse [adjourn] in fellowship and conduct the Vajjī duties<sup>386</sup> in fellowship?”

“Bhante, I have heard that the Vajjīs gather in fellowship, disperse [adjourn] in fellowship and do the Vajjī duties in fellowship.”

“Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs gather in fellowship, disperse [adjourn] in fellowship and do the Vajjī duties in fellowship, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

(3) “What now, Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjīs do not authorize what has not been authorized, and do not abolish what has been authorized, but conduct themselves in accordance with the ancient Vajjī Dharma?”<sup>387</sup>

“Bhante, I have heard that the Vajjīs do not authorize what has not been authorized, and do not abolish what has been authorized, but conduct themselves in accordance with the ancient Vajjī Dharma.”

“Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs do not authorize what has not been authorized, and do not abolish what has been authorized, but conduct themselves in accordance with the ancient Vajjī Dharma, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

(4) “What now, Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjīs honour, respect, esteem and venerate the Vajjī elders and consider it worthwhile to listen to them?”

“Bhante, I have heard that the Vajjīs honour, respect, esteem and venerate the Vajjī elders and consider it worthwhile to listen to them.”

“Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs honour, respect, esteem and venerate the Vajjī elders and consider it worthwhile to listen to them, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

(5) “What now, Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjīs do not forcibly abduct women and maidens of family, compelling them [the women] to live with them?”

“Bhante, I have heard that the Vajjīs do not forcibly abduct women and maidens of family, compelling them [the women] to live with them.”

“Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs do not forcibly abduct women and maidens of family, compelling them [the women] to live with them, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

(6) “What now, Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjīs honour, respect, esteem and venerate the Vajjī shrines, both those within the city and outside it, and do not neglect the due offerings as were given and made to them formerly?” [75]

“Bhante, I have heard that the Vajjīs honour, respect, esteem and venerate the Vajjī shrines, both those within the city and outside it, and do not neglect the due offerings as were given and made to them formerly.”

“Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs honour, respect, esteem and venerate the Vajjī shrines, both those within the city and outside it, and do not neglect the due offerings as were given and made to them formerly, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

(7) “What now, Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjīs duly protect and shelter the arhats [worthy ones] so that they who have not yet come (to the Vajjī country) would come, and that they who have come would dwell in comfort?”

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M 106; MĀ 204 = T1.775c17 || M 26; MĀ 205 = T1.779a10 || M 64; MĀ 212 = T1.793a1 || M 90; MĀ 213 = T.1.-797b19 || M 89 (2005:54 n83). Cf Thich Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya*, 1991:30.

<sup>386</sup> “Vajjī duties,” *Vajjī, karaṇīyā*, lit “that which should be done by the Vajjīs,” ie their affairs of state and their civil and common duties.

<sup>387</sup> “Vajjī Dharma,” *Vajjī, dhammo*, or “the Vajjī code,” eg a criminal (such as a thief) is not summarily judged, but goes through stages of adjudication, until he is found guilty beyond reasonable doubt (DA 2:519).



“Bhante, I have heard that the Vajjīs duly protect and shelter the arhats [worthy ones] so that they who have not yet come (to the Vajjī country) would come, and that they who have come would dwell in comfort.”

“Ānanda, so long as the Vajjīs duly protect and shelter the arhats [worthy ones] so that they who have not yet come (to the Vajjī country) would come, and that they who have come would dwell in comfort, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

### Teaching at Sārandada shrine

**1.5** Then the Blessed One addressed the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha:

“Once, brahmin, when I was staying at the Sārandada shrine,<sup>388</sup> I taught the Vajjīs these **seven conditions for non-decline**.<sup>389</sup> Brahmin, so long as these seven conditions for non-decline endure amongst the Vajjīs, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.”

When the Blessed One has said that, the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, said this to the Blessed One:

“Master Gotama, if the Vajjī were accomplished in even just one of these conditions for non-decline, their growth is to be expected, not [76] their decline, what to say of seven conditions of non-decline! Master Gotama, there is no way that the Vajjī can be overcome by any war of the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha, other than by loss and misfortune, other than by internal discord.”<sup>390</sup>

Well, then, master Gotama, I now take leave. Many are my duties, many my responsibilities.”

“Please, brahmin, do as you deem fit here.”<sup>391</sup>

Then the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, joyfully approving of the Blessed One’s words, rose from his seat, and left.<sup>392</sup>

<sup>388</sup> **The Sārandada Shrine** (*Sārandada cetiya*) was dedicated to the yaksha Sārandada (D 2:75, 102; U 6.1/62; DA 2:523; AA 4:9; UA 323; cf A 3:167, 4:16). See also §3.1n on shrines.

<sup>389</sup> *Aparihāniya, dhammā*. This teaching is also found in **Sārandada S** (A 7.19/4:16 f). The following **Vassakāra S** (A 7.20/4:17-21) records how Ajātasattu sends Vassakāra into Vajjī country as a saboteur [1.1n]. It should be noted here that the Buddha’s remark here obliquely refers to his compassion towards the Vajjīs, and hence tacitly admonishing that they should not be harmed.

In **Kaliṅgara S** (S 20.8), the Buddha speaks of the strengths and weaknesses of the Licchavīs, hinting at their eventual conquest by Ajātasattu, and warns the monks of their own future:

Bhikshus, now the Licchavīs dwell using blocks of wood as pillows. They are diligent and ardent in **exercise** (*upāsana*). The rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha cannot find their weakness nor have a hold on them. But in the future, the Licchavīs will become delicate, with soft and tender hands and feet; they will sleep on soft beds with pillows of cotton until sunrise. *Then Ajātasattu will find their weakness and have a hold on them.*

Bhikshus, now the monks dwell using blocks of wood as pillows. They are diligent and ardent in striving. Māra the Evil One cannot find their weakness nor have a hold on them. But in the future, the monks will become delicate, with soft and tender hand and feet; they will sleep on soft beds with pillows of cotton until sunrise. *Then Māra will find their weakness and have a hold on them.*

Therefore, bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus: “Using blocks of wood as cushions, we will dwell diligent and ardent in striving.” Thus you should train yourselves. (S 20.8/2:267 f)

<sup>390</sup> “Internal discord,” *mithu, bheda*, **Vassakāra** is thinking of sowing disunity amongst the Vajjīs through sabotage. The Dīgha Comy relates how Vassakāra later conspires with Ajātasattu, who feigns to expel him from his kingdom on the charge that he favours the Vajjīs in the assembly. Welcomed by the unsuspecting Licchavīs, Vassakāra is appointed teacher to their children. Through his cunning, he caused the children to quarrel amongst themselves, and the conflict later spread amongst the elders. In three years, the Licchavīs were completely disunited so that Ajātasattu overran their land without resistance (DA 522 f). See prev n.

<sup>391</sup> *Yassa dāni tvam brāhmaṇa kālaṃ maññasī ti*, lit “Please do what you think it is now the time to do.” This is stock: **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.103/1:85 = SD 8.10); **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.6/2:104 = SD 13); **Sekha S** (M 53.3/1:354 = SD 21.14); **Kaṇṇaka-t, thala S** (M 90.17/2:132 f = SD 10.8); **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145.6/3:269 = S 35.-88/4:62,31 = SD 20.15); **Avassuta S** (S 35.243/4:183,15,30); **Khemā Therī S** (S 44.1/4:379,29); **Vesālī S** (S 54.9/-5:321,16,17) & **Thapatayā S** (S 55.6/5:348,27). See Joy Manné, “On a departure formula and its translation,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 10, 1993:27-43.



## CONDITIONS FOR NON-DECLINE OF THE ORDER

### *Saṅgha aparahāniya, dhammā*

#### Rājagaha monks assembled

**1.6a** Then, not long after the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, had left, the Blessed One addressed Ānanda:

“Ānanda, go to all the monks<sup>393</sup> living in dependence of Rājagaha and have all of them to gather in the assembly hall.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One. Then he went to all the monks living in dependence of Rājagaha, and having gathered them all in the assembly hall, went to the Blessed One and said this:

“Bhante, the order of monks is assembled. Now is the time for the Blessed One to do as he thinks fit.”

#### The 7 conditions for non-decline (1)

**1.6b** Then the Blessed One rose from his seat and went to the assembly hall and sat down on the prepared seat. Thus seated down, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Bhikshus, I will teach you **the seven conditions for non-decline**.<sup>394</sup> Listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

(1) “Bhikshus, so long as the monks gather regularly and often, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(2) Bhikshus, so long as the monks gather in fellowship, disperse [adjourn] in fellowship and [77] do the Sangha duties in fellowship, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(3) Bhikshus, so long as the monks do not authorize what has not been authorized, and do not abolish what has been authorized, but conduct themselves in accordance with the promulgated training-rules, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(4) Bhikshus, so long as the monks honour, respect, esteem and venerate the elder monks, those long-standing, long gone forth, Sangha fathers, Sangha leaders, and consider it worthwhile to listen to them, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(5) Bhikshus, so long as the monks do not fall under the power of craving that arises in them, that leads to continued births, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(6) Bhikshus, so long as the monks love to dwell in the forest,<sup>395</sup> then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(7) Bhikshus, so long as the monks keep themselves up in mindfulness, so companions in the holy life of virtuous conduct who have not yet come would come (to meet them), and that they who have come would dwell in comfort, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

<sup>392</sup> Here again we see Vassakāra’s aloofness towards the Buddha as contrasted against how Ajātasattu himself takes leave of the Buddha in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2): “The rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi, putta of Magadha, joyfully approving of the Blessed One’s words, rose from his seat, bowed down to him, and, *keeping the Buddha to his right*, departed.” (D 1:85/2.101).

<sup>393</sup> It is interesting to note that here only the “monks” are addressed but not the nuns who by this time number considerably: see §3.8 f below where all the 4 assemblies are mentioned. Either “monks” here is used inclusively for “monks and nuns” or no nuns followed the Buddha on his final journey. It is possible that the texts were edited later (after the Buddha’s passing) to tone down the references to nuns due to external social pressures (where the position of women were lower). A study of the social conditions of India after the Buddha and how they affected the monastics would yield interesting results.

<sup>394</sup> This teaching is also found in (**Aparahāniya**) **Bhikkhu S** (A 7.21/4:21 f). On the conditions of non-decline for the Sangha, see **Intro (10a)** above.

<sup>395</sup> *Araññakesu sen’āsanesu sāpekhā*, lit “one who has a fondness for the dwellings in the forest.”

Bhikshus, so long as these seven conditions for non-decline endure amongst the monks, then, monks, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

### The 7 conditions for non-decline (2)

**1.7** Bhikshus, I will teach you another (set of) **seven conditions for non-decline**.<sup>396</sup> Listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

(1) “Bhikshus, so long as monks do not delight in works [things to do], [78] do not find pleasure in works, are not caught up with delight in works,<sup>397</sup> then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(2) Bhikshus, so long as monks do not delight in talk, do not find pleasure in talk, are not caught up with delight in talk, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(3) Bhikshus, so long as monks do not delight in sleep, do not find pleasure in sleep, are not caught up with delight in sleep, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(4) Bhikshus, so long as monks do not delight in company, do not find pleasure in company, are not caught up with delight in company, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.<sup>398</sup>

(5) Bhikshus, so long as monks do not delight in evil desires, do not fall under the power of evil desires, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(6) Bhikshus, so long as monks do not become evil friends, evil companions, evil comrades,<sup>399</sup> then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(7) Bhikshus, so long as monks do not stop short of any lesser attainments,<sup>400</sup> then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

Bhikshus, so long as these seven conditions for non-decline endure amongst the monks, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

### The 7 conditions for non-decline (3)

**1.8** Bhikshus, I will teach you another (set of) **seven conditions for non-decline**.<sup>401</sup> Listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

(1) “Bhikshus, so long as monks have faith [are faithful]...<sup>402</sup>

<sup>396</sup> This teaching is also found in (**Aparahāniya**) **Kamma S** (A 7.22/4:22). Cf (**Parihāniya**) **Sekha S** (A 4.26/4:24 f).

<sup>397</sup> *Na kamm'ārāmā bhavissanti na kamma, ratā na kamm'ārāmatāṃ anuyuttā*. Comy glosses *kamma* here as *katabba, kamma*, “work that should be done,” “work duties” (DA 2:528). The meaning here is that a monk should not be caught up in worldly business and busyness so that they can devote themselves to spiritual development to the teaching others the Dharma, or in the words of **Metta S**: “Having little busyness and living a simple life” (*appa, kicco ca sallahuka, vutti*) (Sn 144 = Kh 9.2).

<sup>398</sup> In **Mahā Suññatā S** (M 122), the Buddha says that a monk who delights in company does not “shine” (*sobhati*) in his teaching (M 122.3/3:110) = SD 11.

<sup>399</sup> *Na pāpa, mittā bhavissanti na pāpa, saḥāyā na pāpa, sampavaṅkā*. Of the modern English trs, apparently only Rhys Davids (D:RD 2:82) renders it correctly.

<sup>400</sup> *Yāvakiyaṃ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū na oramattakena visesādhigamena antarā vosānaṃ āpajjissanti*, lit “Monks, so long as monks do not, on their quest for excellence, come to a stop with an insignificant measure...” In other words, a practitioner should not relent until awakening is attained. This statement relates directly to Ānanda’s spiritual status [§5.13]. Rhys Davids thinks this is an interesting analogue to Philippians 3:13 of the Bible.

<sup>401</sup> This teaching is also found in (**Aparahāniya**) **Saddhiya S** (A 7.23/4:22 f).

<sup>402</sup> Comy here (DA 2:529) mentions 4 kinds of faith:

(1) faith through attainment (*āgamāniya, saddhā*, other Comys: *āgamana, saddhā*), that is, the faith of the “omniscient” Bodhisattva [one bound to become a fully self-awakened one] by mastering it since his firm resolve (to become Buddha) (*sabbaññū, bodhisattānaṃ saddhā abhinīhārato paṭṭhāya āgatattā*);

- (2) ...have moral shame...
- (3) ...have moral fear...
- (4) ...are learned [have heard much]... [79]
- (5) ...are those who exert themselves [are those who put forth effort in spiritual development]...
- (6) ...are established in mindfulness...
- (7) ...are wise, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

Bhikshus, so long as these seven conditions for non-decline endure amongst the monks, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

### The 7 conditions for non-decline (4): the 7 limbs of awakening<sup>403</sup>

**1.9** Bhikshus, I will teach you another (set of) **seven conditions for non-decline**.<sup>404</sup> Listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

- (1) “Bhikshus, so long as monks would cultivate the awakening-factor of mindfulness, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.
- (2) so long as monks would cultivate the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.
- (3) so long as monks would cultivate the awakening-factor of effort, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.
- (4) so long as monks would cultivate the awakening-factor of zest, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.
- (5) so long as monks would cultivate the awakening-factor of tranquillity, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.
- (6) so long as monks would cultivate the awakening-factor of concentration, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.
- (7) so long as monks would cultivate the awakening-factor of equanimity, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

Bhikshus, so long as these seven conditions for non-decline endure amongst the monks, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

### The 7 conditions for non-decline (5): the 7 perceptions

**1.10** Bhikshus, I will teach you another (set of) **seven conditions for non-decline**.<sup>405</sup> Listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:<sup>406</sup>

(2) faith through realization [understanding] (*adhigama, saddhā*), that is, the attainment of the noble saints through realization [understanding] (*ariya, sāvakaṇaṃ paṭivedhena adhiḡatattā*);

(3) faith by conviction (*okappana, saddhā*), that is, conviction by way of unshakability [unshakable faith] when it is said [when he hears the words], “Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha” (*Buddho dhammo saṅgho ti vutte acala, bhāvena okappanā*);

(4) faith of calm joy [“confidence of trust” (Gethin 2001:115 n51)] (*pasāda, saddhā*), that is, the arising of calm and joyful faith (*pasād’uppatti*). (DA 2:529; MA 3:325 f = AA 3:257)

See **Pubba,koṭṭhaka S** (S 48.44/5:220-222) = SD 10.7 Intro (1) (2005).

<sup>403</sup> “Limbs of awakening,” *bojjhaṅga* or *sambojjhaṅga*.

<sup>404</sup> This teaching is also found in (**Aparahāniya**) **Bodhi S** (A 7.24/4:23).

<sup>405</sup> This teaching is also found in (**Aparahāniya**) **Saññā S** (A 7.25/4:24).

<sup>406</sup> Another set of 7 perceptions are given in (**Vitthāra**) **Saññā S 2** (A 7.46), where each of these meditations are explained in some detail: perception of impurity (*asubha, saññā*), perception of death (*marāṇa, saññā*), perception of repulsiveness of food (*āhāre paṭikkāla, saññā*), perception of disenchantment with the world (*sabba, loka anabhiraṭa, saññā*), perception of impermanence (*anicca, saññā*), perception of unsatisfactoriness in impermanence (*anicce dukkha, saññā*), perception of impermanence (*anatta, saññā*) (A 7.46/4:46-53).

- (1) “Bhikshus, so long as monks would cultivate the perception of impermanence...
- (2) so long as monks would cultivate the perception of not-self...
- (3) so long as monks would cultivate the perception of the foul<sup>407</sup> ...
- (4) so long as monks would cultivate the perception of danger...
- (5) so long as monks would cultivate the perception of letting go (of defilements),<sup>408</sup> ...
- (6) so long as monks would cultivate the perception of fading away (of lust),<sup>409</sup> ...
- (7) so long as monks would cultivate the perception of ending (of suffering),<sup>410</sup> then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline. [80]

Bhikshus, so long as these seven conditions for non-decline endure amongst the monks, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

### The 6 conditions for non-decline (6): the 6 conditions of conciliation

**1.11** Bhikshus, I will teach you **six conditions for non-decline**.<sup>411</sup> Listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

(1) “Bhikshus, so long as monks would show lovingkindness to companions in the holy life by way of deed [bodily action] both openly and in private, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(2) Bhikshus, so long as monks would show lovingkindness to companions in the holy life by way of speech openly and in private, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(3) Bhikshus, so long as monks would show lovingkindness to companions in the holy life by way of thought both openly and in private, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(4) Bhikshus, so long as monks would mutually share<sup>412</sup> with virtuous companions in the holy life whatever they receive rightfully, even<sup>413</sup> the contents of their alms-bowl, enjoying those gains without thinking of apportioning them [not thinking of dividing them in a biased manner],<sup>414</sup> then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.<sup>415</sup>

(5) Bhikshus, so long as monks would dwell compatibly accomplished in the moral virtue with the moral precepts untattered, not rent [without any hole], unmixed [not twisting the rules], spotless,

<sup>407</sup> In the Suttas, *asubha,saññā* (perception of foulness) refers to the 31 parts of the body (32 according to Comy): head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin; flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys; heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs; mesentery, bowels, stomach, excrement[, brain (in the head)]; \* bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat; tears, tal-low, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.’ [\*32<sup>nd</sup> part: Kh 3, Pm 1:6 f; Vism 8.42-144/239-266.] The term *asubha,nim-itta* (the sign of foulness) in Comys, refers to one or other of the 10 foul objects, ie a corpse in one of the 10 stages of decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f).

<sup>408</sup> MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (*vossagga*): “giving up” (*paric-cāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), ie culminating in nirvana.

<sup>409</sup> *Virāga* also “fading away [of lust]” or “dispassion” (see §21).

<sup>410</sup> That is, “cessation of suffering” (*nirodha*) (see §21).

<sup>411</sup> These 6 conditions are also called “conditions of conciliation” (*sāraṇīya,dhammā*, D 3:245; A 6.11/3:288 f). These 6 qualities endear one to others and causes others to constantly recall (*sāraṇīya*) one with respect, joy and love. As such, they also conduce to social and communal harmony, solidarity and progress. See **Sama,jīvi S** (A 4.-55), where those living the spiritual life are said to be compatible (*sama*) in faith (*saddhā*), moral virtue (*sīla*), charity (*cāga*), and wisdom (*paññā*) (A 4.55/2:61 f) = SD 5.1 Intro. On *sāraṇīya*, see DPL 463.

<sup>412</sup> “Mutually share,” *sādhāraṇa,bhogī*, lit “those who share commonly.”

<sup>413</sup> “Even,” *antamaso*.

<sup>414</sup> “Enjoying those gains without thinking of apportioning them,” *tathā,rūpehi lābhehi appaṭivibhatta,bhogī bhavissanti*. The word *appaṭivibhatta* tr as (1) not divided in a biased manner; (2) = *sādhāraṇa*, common, ie to be enjoyed in common. It is the opp of *paṭivibhatta*, “divided in a biased manner.”

<sup>415</sup> *Yāvaktvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū ye te lābhā dhammikā dhamma,laddhā antamaso patta,pariyāpanna,mattam pi tathā,rūpehi lābhehi appaṭivibhatta,bhogī bhavissanti silavantehi sa,brahmacārīhi sādhāraṇa,bhogī, vuddhi y’eva bhikkhave bhikkhunam paṭikankhā no parihāni*.



liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, giving rise to concentration,<sup>416</sup> and so too they dwell with their companions in the holy life, both openly and in private, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.

(6) Bhikshus, so long as monks would dwell compatibly accomplished in the right view that leads to the noble liberation, conducing to the utter destruction of suffering, dwelling in such manner with their companions in the holy life both openly and in private, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline. [81]

Bhikshus, so long as these six conditions for non-decline endure amongst the monks, then, bhikshus, growth for the monks is to be expected, not their decline.”

## The three trainings

**1.12** Then the Blessed One, while staying on Mount Vulture Peak at Rājagaha, gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,<sup>417</sup>

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from **the mental influxes**, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> “Moral virtues unbroken, ...giving rise to concentration,” *sīlāni akhaṇḍāni acchiddāni asabalāni akammāsāni bhujissāni viññūpasatṭhāni aparāmatṭhāni samādhi,saṁvattanakāni* (D 2:80, 3:245; M 1:322, 2:251; S 5:408; A 3:134, 3:289, 290; Pm 1:44; Nett 56). These are said to be “virtues dear to the noble ones,” *ariya,kantāni sīlāni* (S 5:364, 382, 386, 396, 408; A 3:36). The virtues of the noble one are explained at Vism 221 f. SA says that the noble ones do not violate the five precepts; hence, these virtues are dear to them (SA 2:74). See UA 268. On the phrase, *akhaṇḍāni acchiddāni asabalāni akammāsāni* (“unbroken, untorn, unmixed, spotless”), DA (speaking of the seven groups of monastic offences, V 5:91) explains that when one commits the first or the last of them, one is said to be “**tattered**” (*khaṇḍa*), like one whose robe is torn all around at the edges; if he commits one of the middle offences, he “**rent**” [holed] (*chidda*) like one whose robe that is rent [with a hole] in its middle; if one commits two or three successive offences, one’s conduct is “**mottled**” (*sabala*), like a cow with red or black pigments, with a different colour rising upon its back or belly; or, if one transgresses now and then, one’s conduct is said to be “**blotchy**” (*kammāsa*), like a cow with coloured spots here and there. (DA 2:536)

Cf **Ṭhānāni S** (A 4.92) = SD 14.11b.

<sup>417</sup> This stock summary repeats 8 times [1.12, 1.14, 1.18, 2.4, 2.10, 2.20, 4.4, 4.12], attesting to the importance of **the three trainings**. In **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44), the nun Dhammadinnā explains to the layman Visākha that “the three aggregates [three trainings] are not included in the noble eightfold path, friend Visākha, but the noble eightfold path is included in **the three aggregates**. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood states are included in the aggregate of moral virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration states are included in the aggregate of concentration. Right view and right thought are included in the aggregate of wisdom” (M 44.11/1:301). Unlike in the term *pañca-k,khandha*, “aggregates” (*khandha*) here merely refers to a grouping without clinging. Mrs C A F Rhys Davids (*What was the original gospel of Buddhism?* 1938b: 60), noticing the “omission” of the noble eightfold path in the Aṭṭhaka Nipāta (Book of Eights) of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, conjectures that the noble eightfold path is a later (post-Buddha) teaching. Her conjecture has led other scholars like GC Pande (*Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, 1974:518) to hold a similar opinion. What we have here is an “academic problem” where truth is judged by the text rather than by insight, as in the case of the practitioner benefiting from the oral tradition of living Dharma teachers. The academic tradition, dry and professional as it is, helps to test the truth and worth of what is purported as Dharma—and yet the test of the dish is in one’s eating it! On the tension between the cold academic and the spiritual practitioner, see Sungtaek Cho, “The rationalist tendency in odern Buddhist scholarsgip: A revaluation,” *Philosophy East and West* 52,4 Oct 2002:426-440. See **Intro (10d)**.

<sup>418</sup> *Iti sīlāni iti samādhi iti paññā, sīla,paribhāvito samādhi maha-p,phalo hoti mahānisaṁso, samādhi,paribhāvita paññā maha-p,phalā hoti mahānisaṁsā, paññā,paribhāvitaṁ cittaṁ sammad eva āsavehi vimuccati, seyyathīdam kām’āsava bhav’āsava diṭṭh’āsava avijjāsava ti.*

## AMBA,LAṬṬHIKĀ

### The rajah's lodging, Ambalatthikā

**1.13** Now when the Blessed One had stayed at Rājagaha for as long as he thought fit, he addressed the venerable Ānanda, thus:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go<sup>419</sup> to **Amba,laṭṭhikā**.<sup>420</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One with a large company of monks arrived in Amba,laṭṭhikā.

### The three trainings

**1.14** There the Blessed One stayed in the rajah's lodging (in the royal park)<sup>421</sup> in Amba,laṭṭhikā.

Then the Blessed One, while staying in the rajah's lodging (in the royal park) in Amba,laṭṭhikā, gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from the mental influxes, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”



Ruins of ancient Nālandā

## NĀLANDĀ

### Pāvārikā mango grove, Nālandā

**1.15** Now when the Blessed One had stayed at Amba,laṭṭhikā for as long as he thought fit, he addressed the venerable Ānanda, thus:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Nālandā**.<sup>422</sup>

<sup>419</sup> “Come,...let us go,” *āyāma*, imp 1 pl of *āyāti*, meaning (1) “he comes, arrives, approach, reach, attain, return” (V 1:30; D 3:19; S 1:43); sometimes contextually = *gacchati*, “he goes” (SnA 2:480,16 ad Sn 669; *gacchāma*, SnA 2:463,7 ad Sn 116). The imp often means “he goes” rather than “he comes,” eg imp 1 pl *āyāma*, “come, let us go!” (V 3:10; D 16 §1.13/2:81, §1.15/2:81, §1.19/2:84, §2.1/2:90, §2.5/2:91, §4.5/2:123 (x4), §4.13/2:126, §4.38/2:134, §5.1/2:137). (2) “he gets into, passes into, falls into, meets with, becomes” (*yogaṃ āyanti maccuno*, S 46/1.20 /1:-11,23; *kodho vo vasam ~ātu*, S 1:140,1\*; *ākāsam indriyāni saṅkamati ~anti*, S 3:207,4). See **Khandha S** (S 22.48) = SD 17.1 Intro (5).

<sup>420</sup> **Amba,laṭṭhikā**, Skt Āmra,yaṣṭikā (or Veṇu,yaṣṭika, Lamotte 1988a:22), was located halfway between Rājagṛha and Nālandā, on the Buddha's first lap of the northbound final journey. It was a royal park, surrounded by a rampart and the royal rest-house is adorned with paintings (DA 1:14). See foll n.

<sup>421</sup> “The rajah's lodging,” *rāj'āgāraka*. As in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.1.2/1:1) where Comy says that the king had built there a well-crafted building for his sport (DA 1:14). See prev n.

<sup>422</sup> **Nālandā**, located on the outskirts of Rājagṛha, has been identified by Cunningham on the basis of distances and directions given by the Chinese pilgrims and some image inscriptions discovered at the ruins of the village of

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One with a large company of monks arrived in Nālandā. There the Blessed One stayed in **the Pāvārikā mango grove** at Nālandā.

### Sāriputta’s lion-roar

**1.16** <sup>423</sup>Then the venerable **Sāriputta** went up to the Blessed One, and having saluted him [82] sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the venerable Sāriputta said this to the Blessed One:

“It is thus clear to me [Such is my faith],<sup>424</sup> bhante, that there never has been, there will never be, and there is now no other recluse or brahmin who is better or wiser than the Blessed One, that is to say, as regards self-awakening!”<sup>425</sup>

“Lofty indeed, are the words you utter, Sāriputta, and lordly as a bull, too! You are absolutely caught up in a lion-roar,<sup>426</sup> saying, ‘It is clear to me [Such is my faith],<sup>427</sup> bhante, that there never has been, there will never be, and there is now no other recluse or brahmin who is better or wiser than the Blessed One, that is to say, as regards self-awakening!’

Well now, Sāriputta, were you with the arhats [worthy ones] fully self-awakened ones of past times, so that with your mind you have grasped the minds of all the Blessed Ones thus, ‘Such is the moral virtue of the Blessed Ones, such is their nature, such is their wisdom, such is how they live, such is their liberation?’<sup>428</sup>

“No, bhante.”

“Well then, Sāriputta, will you be with the arhats [worthy ones] fully self-awakened ones of future times, so that with your mind you will grasp the minds of all the Blessed Ones thus, ‘Such is the moral

Bargaon near the Nālandā railway station of the Bakhtiarpur-Bihar branch line of the Eastern railway. There is a high road that starts from Rājagṛha passing through Nālandā and goes up to Pāṭaligrāmaka (D 2:48). According to the Mahāvastu, Nālandā is the birthplace of Śāriputra (Mvst 2:56), who visits the Buddha there.

<sup>423</sup> The events of this section [§1.16] are greatly expanded in **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28) = (**Nālandā S**, S 47.12/5:159-161, but without the last para). This is **Sāriputta**’s last meeting with the Buddha. Knowing that he will die in 7 days, he takes leave of the Buddha and visits his mother at Nāla,gāmaka (S 47.12/5:161), and passes away on the full moon day of Kattikā (Oct-Nov) (Tha 1158-1161; DA 2:549 f; SA 3:214-221; J 1:391). **Moggallāna**, his closest friend and the Buddha’s left hand monk, passes away a fortnight later on the new moon day of Māgasira (Nov-Dec), 5 months before the Buddha. On assassins’ attempts on Moggallāna’s life, see J 522/5:125-127; DhA 10.7/3:65-71. Both Sāriputta and Moggallāna are older than the Buddha (DhA 1:73). The Buddha reminisces about the two chief disciples in **Ukkacelā S** (S 47.14/5:163-165): see §3.1n below.

**Chronological problem:** “The event related in this [**Cunda S**, S 47.13/5:161-163] poses a problem for the traditional chronology of the Buddha’s life. In the Mahāparinibbāna S, Sāriputta’s lion roar [**Nālandā S**, S 47.12] takes place during what appears to be the Buddha’s final journey along the route from Rājagaha to Vesālī. From Vesālī the Buddha heads for Kusinārā without returning to Sāvattḥī, some 200 km to the west. Yet the present sutta shows the Buddha residing at Sāvattḥī when he receives the news of Sāriputta’s death. To preserve the traditional chronology, the Comys (SA here & DA 2:550) have the Buddha make an additional side trip to Savattḥī following his rains retreat at Beluva,gāmaka [D 16.2.21-26/2:98 f], an excursion not mentioned in Mahā Parinibbāna S. Sāriputta accompanies him on this trip to Sāvattḥī, later takes his leave and returns to his native village Nālaka,gāma, where he falls ill and dies.” (S:B 1923 n157). All the Chin versions omit this conversation. This fact and that the Buddha had died earlier, shows that this episode must have been added later. On **Sāriputta**’s parinirvana, see Nyanaponika & Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, 1997:47-59; also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:5.26. On **Moggallāna**’s parinirvana, see Nyanaponika & Hecker 1997:100-5; also Piya Tan 2004:5.35.

<sup>424</sup> *Evam, pasanno.*

<sup>425</sup> Cf. Prasenajit’s remarks about arhats, S 3.11/177-79 = Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, ch 8 “The Thundering Silence” §14.

<sup>426</sup> *Ekamso gahito siha,nādo nadito.*

<sup>427</sup> “It is clear to me,” *evam passano.*

<sup>428</sup> *Kin nu Sāriputta ye te ahesuṃ atītaṃ addhānaṃ arahanto sammā,sambuddhā, sabbe te Bhagavanto cetasa ceto paricca viditā, evaṃ,silā te Bhagavanto ahesuṃ iti pi, evaṃ,dhammā evam,paññā evaṃ.vihāri evaṃ,vimuttā te Bhagavanto ahesuṃ iti pi ti.*

virtue of the Blessed Ones, such is their nature,<sup>429</sup> such is their wisdom, such is how they live, such is their liberation’?”

“No, bhante.”

“Well then, Sāriputta, do you know me as the arhat [worthy one], fully self-awakened one, so that with your mind you have grasped my mind thus, ‘Such is the moral virtue of the Blessed One, such is his nature, such is his wisdom, such is how he lives, such is his liberation’?”

“No, bhante.”

“So then, Sāriputta, you do not have the knowledge of the minds of the arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones of the past, the future and the present! But then, Sāriputta, why do you utter lofty [83] and lordly words; why are you absolutely caught up in a lion-roar, saying, ‘It is clear to me [Such is my faith], bhante, that there never has been, there will never be, and there is now no other recluse or brahmin who is better or wiser than the Blessed One, that is to say, as regards self-awakening!’?”<sup>430</sup>

**1.17a** “No, bhante, I have no knowledge of the minds of the worthy fully self-awakened ones of the past, of the future or of the present. **But it is known through the drift of the Dharma.**<sup>431</sup>

### Parable of the frontier city

**1.17b** Bhante, it is just as if there were a royal frontier city with strong bastions and a strong wall with an archway that has a single gate, where a wise gate-keeper, skilled and intelligent, who keeps out strangers and lets in only those he knows. And he, constantly patrols and follows along a path, so that he would see any fissure or cleft in the walls (large enough) for even a cat to crawl through. But whatever larger creatures that enter or leave the city, must all enter or leave through this very gate.<sup>432</sup>

Even so, bhante, is the drift of the Dharma known to me.

Bhante, whatever arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones, there were of past times, all these Blessed Ones,

having overcome the five mental hindrances<sup>433</sup> that are mental impurities that weaken wisdom, then placing their minds firmly in the four focusses of mindfulness,<sup>434</sup>

<sup>429</sup> “Such is their nature,” *evaṃ, dhammā*. D:W renders this as “such was their teaching,” which is problematic as obviously all the Buddhas teach the same Dharma, and as such Sāriputta would clearly then know this. Moreover, it is evident from the flow of ideas and context, that the Buddha is referring to the future Buddha’s spiritual qualities.

<sup>430</sup> Nina van Gorkom makes a sobering note here: “How can we find out who is an ariyan [saint]? There is no way to know who is an ariyan, unless we have become enlightened ourselves. It cannot be known from someone’s outward appearance whether he is an ariyan or not. People who are very amiable and peaceful are not necessarily ariyans. However, we can take our refuge in the ariyan Sangha even if we do not personally know any ariyans. We can think of their virtues, no matter whether they are in this plane of existence or in other planes. The ariyans prove that there is a way to the end of defilements. We should know what the condition is for the end of defilements: the cultivation of wisdom. The monks, nuns, men and women layfollowers who were ariyans in the Buddha’s time proved that what the Buddha taught can be realized in daily life. The Buddha did not teach abstract ideas, he taught reality. Should those who want to realize the truth not walk the same Path they walked, even if they still have a long way to go?” (*Buddhism in Daily Life*, 1977:76) <http://www.dhammadownload.com/outlook.html>

<sup>431</sup> “The drift of the Dharma,” *dhamm’ anvaya* (D 2:83 = 3:100), ie by inference through the Dharma. CPD gives these meanings of *anvaya*: (1) series, lineage, succession; (2) successor, next, following; (3) ifc: following, descended from, dependent on; (4) (logical) connection, reasoning, inference, conclusion, consequence; (5) “positive concomitance.” I here follow the tr of PED 338b & Walshe, and guided by Comys which gloss *anvaya* as *anumāna* (inference) (DA 3:880, MA 3:352, SA 3:210). Sāriputta means that his lion-roar is based on his understanding and realization of the Dharma. This episode is expanded in **Sampasādanīya Sutta** (D 28).

<sup>432</sup> This is a beautiful parable for mental cultivation. Cf another “frontier city” parable for mental cultivation in **Kimsuka S** (S 35.245/4:194 f) = SD 2.17.8 (2003) where the Buddha explains the imageries he uses. See the very important **Nagara S** (S 12.65) = SD 14.2.

<sup>433</sup> **The 5 mental hindrances** (*pañca nīvaraṇā*) are: (1) sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*); (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*); (4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkuccha*); (5) persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*). See (**Nīvaraṇā**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55/5:121-126).

<sup>434</sup> **The focusses of mindfulness** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are: (1) Contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), comprising 14 exercises: the 4 postures, full awareness, reflection on foulness, the 4 elements [§§12-13], and the 9 “corpse” meditations; (2) Contemplations of feelings (*vedanā’nupassanā*), 1 exercise, considering feeling in terms of the



then cultivating the seven awakening-factors<sup>435</sup> according to reality, attain to the peerless full self-awakening.<sup>436</sup>

### The three trainings

**1.18** Then the Blessed One, while staying in [84] the Pāvārikā mango grove at Nālandā gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from the mental influxes, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”

### PĀṬALI, GĀMA

#### The lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma

**1.19** Now when the Blessed One had stayed at Nālandā for as long as he thought fit, he addressed the venerable Ānanda, thus:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Pāṭali, gāma**.”<sup>437</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One with a large company of monks arrived in Pāṭali, gāma.

**1.20**<sup>438</sup> Now at Pāṭali, gāma, the lay followers said, “It is said that the Blessed One has arrived in Pāṭali, gāma!” Then the lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma went to the Blessed One, and having saluted the Blessed One, sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma said this to the Blessed One:

“May the Blessed One consent to stay at our rest-house!”

And the Blessed One consented by his silence.

**1.21** Then, the lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma, knowing that the Blessed One had consented (to their invitation), rose from their seats, saluted the Blessed One and keeping their right side to him, departed. They went to the rest-house, fully prepared it for occupation, preparing the seats, setting up the water-pot, and filled the oil-lamp.

affective quality—as either pleasant, painful or neutral—with each being examined again as being either carnal or spiritual; (3) Contemplation of the mind (or mind-consciousness) (*cittānupassanā*), 1 exercise, examining 16 states of mind coloured by their concomitants—**Pubba S** (S 51.11/5:263-266); (4) Contemplation of mind-objects (or “the nature of things”) (*dharmānupassanā*) [§§36-45] is the most diversified exercise involving these 5 schemes: the 5 hindrances, the 5 aggregates, the 6 sense-bases, the 7 awakening-factors, and the 4 noble truths. See **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22), **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118) and **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62).

<sup>435</sup> **The 7 awakening-factors** (*satta (sam)bojjhaṅga*) are: (1) awakening-factor of mindfulness (*sati sambojjhaṅga*); (2) awakening-factor of mental investigation (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*); (3) awakening-factor of effort (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*); (4) awakening-factor of zest (*pīti sambojjhaṅga*); (5) awakening-factor of tranquillity (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*); (6) awakening-factor of concentration (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*); (7) awakening-factor of equanimity (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*) (D 3:251, 282; Vbh 277).

<sup>436</sup> After a long intervening passage, **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28.21/3:116) and **Nālandā S** (S 47.12.10/5:161) close with the Buddha saying: “Therefore, Sāriputta, you should repeat this Dharma exposition frequently to the monks and the nuns, to the layman followers and the laywoman followers. Even though some foolish people may have doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata, when they hear this Dharma exposition their doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata will be abandoned.” The underscored passage refers to the comprehensive meditation practice leading to awakening: see **The Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** = SD 13.1(6b).

<sup>437</sup> **Pāṭali, gāma** (Skt Pāṭali, grāmaka), 100 km (62 miles) from Rājagṛha. This fortress would later become the capital of the Magadhan empire. Later on, it was called Puṣpa, pura or Kusuma, pura, and during Asoka’s time, Pāṭali, putra. It was located in the villages of Kumrahar, Bulandibagh, in the outskirts of modern Patna in Bihar, near the confluence of the Ganges and the Son (though the Son has now somewhat changed its course). Due to high water level and because the modern city is located over much of the ancient one, excavation of Pāṭali, putra has been limited. See Finegan 1989:90. See also Intro (7c) above.

<sup>438</sup> The foll §§ [1.20-34] are found in V 1:227 (elaborated), D 3:209, S 4:183, U 8.6.

Then they went to the Blessed One, and having saluted him, stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, the lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, the rest-house is fully prepared for occupation: the seats are prepared, the water-pot set up, and the oil-lamp filled. Now is the time for the Blessed to do as he thinks fit.” [85]

**1.22** Then, the Blessed One, having dressed himself, taking robe and bowl, went with the monks to the rest-house. After arriving, he washed his feet,<sup>439</sup> and then sat down facing the east resting against<sup>440</sup> the middle pillar.

The order of monks, too, having washed their feet, went in and sat down with their backs to the west wall, with the Blessed One before them.

The lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma, too, having washed their feet, sat down with their backs to the east wall facing the west, with the Blessed One before them.

### Advantages of moral virtue<sup>441</sup>

**1.23** Then the Blessed One addressed the lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma:

Houselords, there are **these five disadvantages of being immoral**, of moral failing. What five?

(1) Here, houselords, the immoral, one of moral failing, suffers great loss of wealth through being heedless in managing his affairs. This is the first disadvantage for the immoral, one of moral failing.

(2) Furthermore, houselords, for the immoral, one of moral failing, a bad report of his reputation will spread about. This is the second disadvantage for the immoral, one of moral failing.

(3) Furthermore, houselords, for the immoral, one of moral failing, whatever assembly he goes to, whether of nobles [kshatriya], of priests [brahmins], of houselords or of recluses, he approaches without confidence, troubled. This is the third disadvantage for the immoral, one of moral failing.

(4) Furthermore, houselords, the immoral, one of moral failing, dies confused. This is the fourth disadvantage for the immoral, one of moral failing.

(5) Furthermore, houselords, the immoral, one of moral failing, after death, when the body has broken up, re-appears in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell. This is the fifth disadvantage for the immoral, one of moral failing.

These are the five advantages in being virtuous, of success in moral virtue. [86]

**1.24** Houselords, there are **these five advantages of being virtuous**, of moral success. What five?

(1) Here, houselords, the virtuous, one of moral success, gains a great store of wealth through being heedful in managing his affairs. This is the first advantage for the virtuous, one of moral success.

(2) Furthermore, houselords, for the virtuous, one of moral success, a good report of his reputation is spread about. This is the second advantage is for the virtuous, one of moral success.

(3) Furthermore, houselords, for the virtuous, one of moral success, whatever assembly he goes to, whether of nobles, of priests, of houselords or of recluses, he approaches with confidence, untroubled. This is the third advantage is for the virtuous, one of moral success.

(4) Furthermore, houselords, the virtuous, one of moral success, dies unconfused. This is the fourth advantage for the virtuous, one of moral success.

(5) Furthermore, houselords, the virtuous, one of moral success, after death, when the body has broken up, re-appears in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in heaven. This is the fifth advantage for the virtuous, one of moral success.

These are the five advantages in being virtuous, of success in moral virtue.

**1.25** The Blessed One then **instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened**<sup>442</sup> the lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma with Dharma talk for most of the night.

<sup>439</sup> “He washed his feet,” *pāde pakkhāletvā* (V 1:227, 3:35; D 2:85, 204, 3:204; M 1:354; S 1:107, 4:183; A 3:320; U 59, 86). Although *pakkhāletvā* (fr *pakkhāleti*; cf *khāleti*) is active, it is likely here that the Buddha’s feet “were washed,” upon his arrival, by a lay follower. Even today it is customary amongst traditional Sinhalese Buddhists to wash the feet of monks who have come for offerings (*dāna*, Sinh *dāne*).

<sup>440</sup> “Resting against,” *nissāya*, fig “leaning against.” It is likely that the Buddha, in his advanced age, would be resting his back against the wall. However, due to the large number of monks and lay followers (in the next two paragraphs), it is unlikely that all of them could be resting their backs against the wall.

<sup>441</sup> This whole section also found at V 1:226-228; cf D 1:126; DA 2:473; UA 242, 361, 384.

Then he dismissed them, saying,

“Houselords, the night is far spent. Now is the time for you to do as you think fit.”

“Yes, bhante,” the followers of Pāṭali, gāma replied in assent to the Blessed One. Having risen from their seats, they saluted the Blessed One, and keeping their right side to the Blessed One, departed.

Then not long after the lay followers of Pāṭali, gāma had left, the Blessed One went into solitude [meditated and entered dhyana].<sup>443</sup>

### The Pāṭali, putra prophecy

**1.26** Now at that time, Sunīdha and Vassa, kāra,<sup>444</sup> chief ministers of Magadha, were fortifying the town of Pāṭali, gāma as a defence against the Vajjīs.<sup>445</sup> At that time, too, many [87] thousands of devatas [deities] were making their abode in Pāṭali, gāma. And in those parts where devatas of great power made their abode, they bent the minds of the chief ministers to build their houses there. In those parts where devatas of middling power made their abode, they bent the minds of the middling ministers to build their houses there. In those parts where devatas of little power made their abode, they bent the minds of the lesser ministers to build their houses there.

**1.27** With his divine eye, purified and surpassing that of the human, the Blessed One saw many thousands of devatas making their abode in Pāṭali, gāma. Then the Blessed One, having risen early, when it was still night [just before daybreak], addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, who is fortifying Pāṭali, gāma?”

“Bhante, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, are fortifying Pāṭali, gāma as a defence against the Vajjīs.”

**1.28** “Ānanda, it is just as if Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, having taken counsel from the Thirty-three Gods, are fortifying Pāṭali, gāma as a defence against the Vajjīs! Here, Ānanda, with my divine eye, purified and surpassing that of the human, I see many thousands of devatas making their abode in Pāṭali, gāma. And in those parts where devatas of great power made their abode, they bent the minds of the chief ministers to build their houses there. In those parts where devatas of middling power made their abode, they bent the minds of the middling ministers to build their houses there. In those parts where devatas of little power made their abode, they bent the minds of the lesser ministers to build their houses there.

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<sup>442</sup> This action sequence—**instructed** (*sandassetvā*), **inspired** (*samādapetvā*), **roused** (*samuttejetvā*) and **gladdened** (*sampahamsetvā*)...with Dharma talk—reflects the basic structure of the Buddha’s teaching method: (1) the Dharma is shown; (2) the listener/s are filled with enthusiasm; (3) they are fired with commitment; and (4) filled with joy. Comys (eg DA 1:293; UA 242; cf VA 1:65; MA 2:35) explain that by **instructing**, the Buddha dispels the listener’s delusion; by **inspiring** him, heedlessness is dispelled; by **rousing** him, indolence is dispelled; and by **gladdening**, brings the practice to a conclusion. In short, when we teach Dharma to benefit others, we should do our best to bring instruction, inspiration, motivation and joy to the listener. These 4 qualities are, in fact, the sixth or last of the ideal skills of a Dharma speaker. See SD 11.4 Intro (4) & also LS Cousins, in his review of *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (tr Nānamoli) in JBE 4 1997:272, where gives a slightly different listing of the above. See also Kalupahana, *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*, 1992:65-67. See §2.14 below.

<sup>443</sup> “Entered into solitude,” *suññ’āgāre pāvīsi* (lit “entered an empty building”). See D:RD 2:92 (“entered into his private chamber”). The expression *suññ’āgāre abhirati*, “he delights in solitude” occurs 6 times in the Old Commentary on the Pārājika 4 (V 3:91-93) and 5 times in the Old Commentary on the Pācittiya 8 (V 4:25 f). See V:H 1:125 n5. D:W has “spent the remainder of the night in the rest-house left empty by their departure” is an unmarked amplified tr Vajirā & Story has “retired into privacy.” It is remarkable here to note that the early Western translators were right on the mark in their tr Apparently here, the Buddha rests for the night (around 2.00-4.00 am) by dwelling in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana (SA 2:230).

<sup>444</sup> The chief ministers Sunīdha and Vassakāra are in charge of Pāṭali, gāma’s fortifications. See prec n. On their rank, see §1.2n.

<sup>445</sup> **Pāṭali, gāma** (Skt Pāṭali, grāmaka) thus becomes a fortified town standing on the south bank of the Ganges between Rājagṛha and Vaiśālī, that is, on the borders between Magadha and Vṛjī country. Ajāta, sattu has commanded the construction of this fortress to repel any Vṛjī attack. Evidently, he is on the defensive, convinced of the Vṛjī strength. He puts the chief ministers Sunīdha and Vassakāra in charge of Pāṭali, gāma’s fortifications (V 1:228; U 8.6). Cf AA 4:14-17. On the future of Pāṭali, gāma, see **Intro (16c)**.

Ānanda, as far as the realm of the Aryas extend, as far as its trade-route<sup>446</sup> goes, this will be the capital [foremost city], **Pāṭali,putta**, a city [bursting forth like the seeds from the seed-boxes of the Pāṭalī tree].<sup>447</sup> [88] However, Ānanda, Pāṭaliputta will face three dangers—from fire, from water, from internal dissension.”<sup>448</sup>

### Sunīdha and Vassa,kāra

**1.29** Then Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, having approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings, stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha, said this to the Blessed One:

“May master Gotama<sup>449</sup> together with the order of monks accept a meal from us tomorrow.”

The Blessed One consented by his silence.

**1.30a** Then, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, having understood that the Blessed One had consented (to the invitation), rose from their seats, returned to their own houses. When the excellent meal of hard and soft foods were ready, they announced to the Blessed One that it was time.<sup>450</sup>

“Master Gotama, it is time for the meal.”

**1.30b**<sup>451</sup> Then, the Blessed One, having dressed himself in the morning and taking robe and bowl, went, along with the order of monks, to the dwelling [rest-house?] of Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, and sat down on the prepared seat. Then Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, with their own hands,<sup>452</sup> served the order of monks with the Blessed One at its head with excellent foods, hard and soft, and waited on them.

Then when the Blessed One had finished his meal and taken his hand out of the bowl, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, each took a low seat and sat down.

**1.31** And when Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, were seated thus, the Blessed One gave thanks in these verses:<sup>453</sup>

In whatever place a wise man sets up his home,  
He should there feed the virtuous and restrained who live the holy life.

To the deities there he should make offerings.<sup>454</sup>

Thus revered they would revere him, thus honoured they would honour him. [89]

<sup>446</sup> “Trade-routes,” *vaṇippaṭṭha*, possible alt tr “trading centre” or commercial centre. Here Comy mentions that wholesale business occurs here: “as far as is the area where the merchants sell and buy in heaps the goods that they have bought, or as is the dwelling-place for merchants” (DA 2:541) and Sub-comy adds that there is a small market elsewhere (DAṬ 2:178): tr An Yang-Gyu 2003:59.

<sup>447</sup> “City...,” *puṭa,bhedana*, lit refers to a town located at the confluence of a river. Figuratively, it refers to the bursting of the seed-boxes of the Pāṭalī or trumpet flower tree, *Bignonia suaveolens*. See PED: puṭa-bhedana.

<sup>448</sup> This is a remarkable statement to make: either the city was later named following this remark, or “the Buddhists of the first century after the *parinirvāṇa* may perhaps be suspected of slightly embroidering this part of the narrative to connect their Master with the new and prosperous capital” (Warder 1970:70).

<sup>449</sup> “Master Gotama,” *bho Gotama*. On the chief ministers’ manner of addressing see §1.3n.

<sup>450</sup> Note here that the phrase “by the end of the night” (*tassā rattiyā accayena*) is missing, but found in other contexts [§§3.19a, 4:17]. See prev n where Sunīdha and Vassakāra addresses the Buddha by name.

<sup>451</sup> PTS ed misnumbers para here as “27.”

<sup>452</sup> “With their own hands,” *sa,hatthā*. Omitted in Walshe (D:R) and Vajirā & Story.

<sup>453</sup> It is interesting to note here that the Buddha does not give a Dharma discourse. According to the Sarvāstivāda version, the chief minister expresses his wish that through his alms offering to the order, the deities of the city may long prosper and be happy, dedicating the gift in their name. Winternitz thinks that these stanzas and others in this Sutta are original and “are the *first beginnings* of a poetical version of the life of Buddhas (in the form of *sacred ballads*)” (1972:40 n1 original italics). However, not all the stanzas here are found in the Tibetan or the Chinese translations. This probably means that either such stanzas are late or were interpolated later.

<sup>454</sup> *Yā tatha devatā assu tāsam dakkhiṇam ādise*. Here *dakkhiṇa* (giving) refers to the religious offerings made to the devas, but this could also refer to dedication of merit to the devas. In later times, this is reinterpreted in popular Buddhism (esp amongst Sinhalese Buddhists) as “transference of merit.” See **Jāṇussoṇī S** (A 10.177/5:269-273) and **Tirokuḍḍa S** (Kh 7) = SD 26-7 (2003). On the age of this stanzas and others here, see prev n [§1.31].



They will show him compassion as a mother would her own child.  
A man for whom the deities show compassion always sees good fortune.

Then when the Blessed One had given thanks with these verses, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, rose from their seats and left.

## The Ganges

**1.32** At that time, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, chief ministers of Magadha, following closely step for step behind<sup>455</sup> the Blessed One, said:

“The gate by which the recluse Gotama leaves today shall be called the Gotama Gate (*Gotama, dvāra*),<sup>456</sup> and the spot where he crosses the Ganges river shall be called the Gotama Crossing (*Gotama, titha*).”<sup>457</sup>

**1.33** Then the Blessed One reached the Ganges river. At that time the Ganges river was full and overflowing its banks so that a crow could drink from it. Wishing to cross over to the other side, some people were looking for a boat, some people were looking for a wooden raft, some people were binding together a log raft.<sup>458</sup>

Then the Blessed One, just as a strong man would stretch out his bent arm, or bend back his outstretched arm, vanished with the order of monks from the near bank of the Ganges river and landed on the farther bank.<sup>459</sup>

**1.34** When the people saw the Blessed One (on the other side), some, wishing to cross over to the other side, some were looking for a boat, some were looking for a wooden raft, some were binding together a log raft. And the Blessed One, knowing their intention, uttered this verse of uplift:<sup>460</sup>

When they want to cross a sea, a lake or a pond,  
People make a bridge or raft—the wise have already crossed.

## Chapter 2 (Second Recital, *dutiya bhāṇavāra*)

<sup>455</sup> “Following closely step for step behind, *piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubaddhā*, lit “followed right behind...” Vassakāra as we know is a very calculatively political person, and what we have here is an example of close physical proximity but great spiritual distance. Cf §3.1 (D 2:102). See **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1/1:1) = SD 25.3(1.8).

<sup>456</sup> According to the Sarvāstivāda version, the Buddha leaves by the west gate.

<sup>457</sup> “Crossing,” *titha*, usu rendered “ford” but here the river is too wide and deep, as evident from the next para.

<sup>458</sup> A wooden raft (*uḷumpa*) here has its beams bound together by ropes of cloth (V 3:63); VA 1096 however says that it is nailed together. A log raft (*kulla*) is a roughly made float whose parts are tied together with creepers, etc (V 1:230; M 1:135; U 90).

<sup>459</sup> The various texts differ regarding the details of the Buddha’s crossing the Ganges. They however agree that he uses his psychic power to teleport himself and the order across the river. The redactors added this episode despite the Vinaya rule against the public display of psychic powers (Pāc 8 = V 4:25); see **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11) = SD 1.7 Intro (3.3). The Pali texts apparently regard the episode as “symbolic of the Buddha’s attainment of the ‘other side’ of transmigration, ie extinction (*nirvāṇa*), by the power of meditation” (Warder 1970:71).

<sup>460</sup> According to the Sarvāstivāda account, only the Buddha crosses the Ganges by his own power. The monks swim across while other disciples build a raft (Waldschmidt 1950-51:158). The imagery here is obvious: the Buddha has crossed the ocean of suffering; his immediate disciples, the monks, crosses the river of suffering using their own effort; and the lay disciples are working at their own means of the salvation, the raft. On this verse, cf Dh 85.

## VAJĪ (VṚJĪ)

Koṭi, gāma<sup>461</sup>

[90] 2.1 Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda, thus:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Koṭi, gāma**.”<sup>462</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One with a large company of monks arrived in Koṭi, gāma. The Blessed One stayed (among the Vajjīs)<sup>463</sup> in Koṭi, gāma.

2.2a<sup>464</sup> There, the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:<sup>465</sup>

“Bhikshus, it is through not understanding, not penetrating **the four noble truths** that we have had to run for so long, to wander for so long, on this weary path of samsara [birth and death], both you and I.

And what, bhikshus, are the four?

Bhikshus, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble truth of suffering that we have had to run for so long, to wander for so long, on this weary path of samsara, both you and I.

Bhikshus, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble truth of the arising of suffering that we have had to run for so long, to wander for so long, on this weary path of samsara, both you and I.

Bhikshus, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble truth of the ending of suffering that we have had to run for so long, to wander for so long, on this weary path of samsara, both you and I.

Bhikshus, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble truth of the path leading to the ending of suffering that we have had to run for so long, to wander for so long, on this weary path of samsara, both you and I.

2.2b Bhikshus, it is through understanding, penetrating the noble truth of suffering, through understanding, penetrating the noble truth of the arising of suffering, through understanding, penetrating the noble truth of the ending of suffering, through understanding, penetrating the noble truth of the path leading to the ending of suffering that craving for existence is has been rooted out, that which leads to existence has been destroyed, that there is no more rebirth here.”

2.3 Thus said the Blessed One. Having spoken this, the Sugata [well-farer],<sup>466</sup> the Teacher further said this: [91]

Not seeing the four noble truths as they really are,  
Long is the weary path of samsara [birth and death], life after life.  
Having seen them, one pulls out that which leads to existence,  
Having uprooted sorrow’s root, there is no more rebirth.

The three trainings

2.4 Then the Blessed One, while staying in the Koṭi, gāma, gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from

<sup>461</sup> On this section, see §2.14 n by Rhys Davids on possible interpolation.

<sup>462</sup> **Koṭi, gāma** (Skt Koṭi, grāmaka or Kuṭi, grāmaka), a village of the Vṛjīs (**Koṭi, gāma S 1**, S 5.431), located in the vicinity of Bhaddiya, nagara, about 1 *gāvuta* from the Ganges (MahvṬ 560). A *gāvuta* is a quarter *yojana*. A *yojana* is about 11.25 km (7 mi). As such, a *gāvuta* would be about 2.8 km. Buddhaghosa says that the village was so called because it was built near the dome (*koṭi* or *thūpikā*) of Mahā Panāda’s palace, said to have been located and submerged in the middle of the river (J 2:332 f; ThaA 1:287; Mahv 31.5 f).

<sup>463</sup> **Koṭi, gāma S 1** (S 56.21/5.431).

<sup>464</sup> The foll §§ [2.2-3] are found in V 1:230 f, S 5:432 & Nett 166.

<sup>465</sup> D 2:90 = S 5:431 = V 1:231 = Nett 166; Waldschmidt 1950-51:136.

<sup>466</sup> KR Norman regards *sugata* “as having the same relationship to *sugati* as *duggata* has to *duggati*, ie the implied *-gati* is not being used in its technical sense of ‘(category of) rebirth.’ So *duggata* is used in a general sense ‘(one who is) in a bad way’ = ‘poor,’ whereas *Sugata* is used in a very specialized sense ‘(one who is) in a (particularly) good way’ = ‘Buddha’” (1990:154 = 1993:162 f).

the mental influxes, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”

## NĀDIKĀ

### Lay saints

**2.5** <sup>467</sup>Now when the Blessed One had stayed at Koṭṭigāma for as long as he thought fit, he addressed the venerable Ānanda, thus:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Nādikā** [Ñātikā].”<sup>468</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One, together with a large company of monks, arrived in Nādikā, where the Blessed One stayed in the Brick House.<sup>469</sup>

**2.6** <sup>470</sup>Then the venerable Ānanda went to the Blessed One and having saluted the Blessed One, sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:<sup>471</sup>

“Bhante, the monk named Sālha has died in Nādikā: what is his destiny, what is his future state?

Bhante, the nun named Nandā has died in Nādikā: what is her destiny, what is her future state?

Bhante, the layman [92] named Sudatta has died in Nādikā: what is his destiny, what is his future state?

Bhante, the laywoman named Sujātā has died in Nādikā: what is her destiny, what is her future state?

Bhante, the layman named Kakudha [Kakkaṭa]<sup>472</sup> has died in Nādikā: what is his destiny, what is his future state?

<sup>473</sup>Bhante, the layman named Kāliṅga...

Bhante, the layman named Nikkaṭa...

Bhante, the layman named Kaṭṭissabha [Kaṭṭissaha]<sup>474</sup>...

Bhante, the layman named Tuṭṭha...

Bhante, the layman named Santuṭṭha...

Bhante, the layman named Bhadda...

Bhante, the layman named Subhadda has died in Nādikā: what is his destiny, what is his future state?”

**2.7** “Ānanda, the monk Sālha, having right here and now realized for himself through direct knowledge, upon attaining the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom<sup>475</sup> that are influx-free with the destruction of the mental influxes, dwelt therein.”<sup>476</sup>

<sup>467</sup> The events of the following 3 sections [§2.5-7] are expanded in **Jana,vasabha S** (D 18).

<sup>468</sup> **Nādikā** or **Ñātikā** (according to Buddhaghosa, two villages of the same name on the same river bank) was on the highroad between Kuṭṭigāma and Vaiśālī (V 1:230 ff; D 2:90 f, 200; M 1:205). The Buddha’s instructions to Ānanda given here are also recorded in the Saṃyutta, which has **Ñātika** as the place-name (S 5:356 ff.). The Commentaries to both the Dīgha and the Saṃyutta confirm it as “Ñātika,” explaining that “There were two villages close by the same pond, inhabited by the sons of two brothers. Thus, both of them were called Ñātika (‘of the relatives’)” (DA 2:543; SA 2:74).

<sup>469</sup> **The Brick House** (*giṇṇjak’āvasatha*, D 1:91, 2:96; M 1:205; V 1:232), specially mentioned here because generally other buildings are made of wood (MA 2:235).

<sup>470</sup> The foll §§ [2.6-9] are found in S 55.8/5:356.

<sup>471</sup> This section and the foll [§§2.6-7]—on the Mirror of the Dharma—are also recorded in two Saṃyutta discourses: **Giṇṇjak’āvasatha S 1** (S 55.8/5:356 f) and **Giṇṇjak’āvasatha S 3** (S 55.10/5:359 f). In **Giṇṇjak’āvasatha S 2** (S 55.9/5:359), Ānanda questions the Buddha regarding the destiny of the monk Asoka, the nun Asokā, the layman Asoka, and the laywoman Asokā.

<sup>472</sup> **Giṇṇjak’āvasatha S 3** (S 55.10/5:359 f).

<sup>473</sup> From here on [§§2.6-9] as at S 55.10/5:358-60.

<sup>474</sup> **Giṇṇjak’āvasatha S 3** (S 55.10/5:359 f).

<sup>475</sup> “**Liberation of mind and liberation through wisdom**,” respectively, *ceto,vimutti* (or, liberation by concentration, ie through destruction of the mental hindrances) and *paññā,vimutti* (liberation through insight) (A 1:60). One who is *liberated by wisdom* “may not have reached the 8 liberation or deliverances (*vimokkha* = *jhāna*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70.16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their

Ānanda, the nun Nandā, having totally destroyed the lower five mental fetters,<sup>477</sup> has gained spontaneous rebirth [in the Pure Abodes as a non-returned],<sup>478</sup> and without ever returning from that world, will gain parinirvana there.

Ānanda, the layman Sudatta, having destroyed the three fetters<sup>479</sup> and diminished lust, hate and delusion, is a once-returned, returning only once to this world to make an end of suffering.

Ānanda, the laywoman Sujātā, having totally destroyed the three fetters, is a streamwinner, not bound for the lower world,<sup>480</sup> destined for awakening, sure of liberation, bound for awakening.

Ānanda, the layman Kakudha, having totally destroyed the lower five mental fetters, has gained spontaneous rebirth [in the Pure Abodes as a non-returned], and without ever returning from that world, will gain parinirvana there.

Ānanda, the layman Kāliṅga,...

Ānanda, the layman Nikāṭa,...

Ānanda, the layman Kaṭṭhāsabha,...

Ānanda, the layman Tuṭṭha,...

Ānanda, the layman Santuṭṭha,...

Ānanda, the layman Bhadda,...

Ānanda, the layman Subhadda, having totally destroyed the lower five mental fetters, has gained spontaneous rebirth [in the Pure Abodes as a non-returned], and without ever returning from that world, [93] will gain parinirvana there.

proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain **the 8 liberations** (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*), which include the four formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called *liberated both ways*, that is, liberated from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood [§3.33]. Saḷha, like the arhats Sāriputta and Moggallāna, is “liberated both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*). The differences between the two types of liberation are given in **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kiṭṭāgiri S** (M 1:477 f). For full list of the 8 liberations, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15.35/2:70 f) = SD 5.17.35. See also D 3:262, 228; **Vimokkha S**, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120.37/3:103 = SD 3.4.37. See also **Aṭṭha Vimokkha** = SD 62.5 & Analayo 2009:141-148.

<sup>476</sup> “With the destruction of the mental influxes destroyed,” *khīṇ’āsava*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influences), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kāma’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsava*s is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict under *āsava*.

<sup>477</sup> There are **10 fetters** (*samyojanā*): (1) personality view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa, rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa, rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), and (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*kāma, rāga*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*). The abandonment of these 5 constitutes the state of the non-returned (*opapātika* or *anāgāmi*) (see **Ānāpānasati S**, M 118.9-12/3:80 = SD 7.13). This verse evidently refers to the non-returned and seems to out of place in this section on the arhat.

<sup>478</sup> The Pure Abodes (*suddh’āvāsa*) form the five highest heavens of the form world (*rūpa, loka*) inhabited only by non-returned who assume their last birth to become arhats and attain nirvana. These worlds are Āviha (“Non-declining”), Ātappa (“Unworried”), Sudassā (“Clearly Visible”), Sudassī (“Clear-visioned”) and Akaṇiṭṭhā (“Highest”) (D 3:237, M 3:103, Vbh 425, Pug 42-46).

<sup>479</sup> The (first) three fetters: see n18.

<sup>480</sup> *Avinīpāta*, alt tr “not fated for birth in a suffering state”; opp of *vinīpāta*, “the world of suffering,” another name for the 4 woeful courses (*duggati*) or the 4 lower worlds (*apāya*) (Vism 13.92 f). Sometimes 5 woeful courses (*pañca, gati*) (D 3:234=33.2.1, A 11.68) are mentioned: the hells (*nīraya*), the animal kingdom (*tiracchāna, yoni*), the ghost realm (*pitti, visaya*), the human world (*manussa*) and the heavenly world (*deva*). Of these, the first three are woeful, with the asura-demons (*asura, kāya*) as the fourth woeful course. The remaining two are “happy courses” (*sugati*). For a discussion, see Nyanaponika & Bodhi (tr), *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, 1999:14-19.



Ānanda, there are more than fifty laymen from Nādikā who have died, having totally destroyed the lower five mental fetters, have gained spontaneous rebirth [in the Pure Abodes as a non-returner], and without ever returning from that world, will gain parinirvana there.

Ānanda, there are more than ninety laymen from Nādikā who have died, having destroyed the three fetters and diminished lust, hate and delusion, are once-returners, and returning only once to this world, they will make an end of suffering.

Ānanda, there are more than five hundred laymen from Nādikā who have died, having totally destroyed the three fetters, are streamwinners, not bound for the lower world, destined for awakening, sure of liberation, bound for awakening.

## The Dharma mirror

**2.8** It is not remarkable, Ānanda, that human beings should die. But, Ānanda, if each time a person were to die and you were question the Tathāgata in this manner, it would be wearisome for the Tathagata! Therefore, Ānanda, I will teach you a Dharma teaching called **the Dharma Mirror**,<sup>481</sup> by which an accomplished noble disciple, if he wishes, could by himself discern of himself, thus:

‘Destroyed is hell for me! Destroyed is the animal birth! Destroyed is the realm of the departed! Destroyed is the plane of misery, the evil destination, the lower realm! I am a streamwinner, not bound for the lower world, destined for awakening, sure of liberation, bound for awakening!’

**2.9** And what, Ānanda, is this Dharma Mirror, by which an accomplished noble disciple, if he wishes, could by himself discern of himself, thus:

‘Destroyed is hell for me! Destroyed is the animal birth for me! Destroyed is the realm of the departed for me! Destroyed is the plane of misery, the evil destination, the lower realm! I am a streamwinner, not bound for the lower world, for awakening, sure of liberation, bound for awakening!’<sup>482</sup>

(1) THE LIMBS OF A STREAMWINNER. Here, Ānanda, the noble disciple is accomplished in wise faith<sup>483</sup> in the Buddha thus:

‘So too, is he the Blessed One:<sup>484</sup> for, he is arhat, the fully self-awakened one, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable persons, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’

(2) He is accomplished in wise faith in the Dharma thus:

‘Well-taught is the True Teaching of the Blessed One, to be self-realized, timeless, for one to “come and see,” leading onward, to be personally known by the wise.

(3) He is accomplished in wise faith in the Sangha thus:

<sup>481</sup> **The Dharma Mirror** (*dharm’ādāsa*) is elsewhere called “the limbs of a streamwinner,” *sotāpannassa aṅgāni* (D 33.1.11(14)/3:227), ie the qualities of one who has attained streamwinning. For a shorter statement on the limbs of a streamwinner, see **Ogadhā S** (S 55.2/5:343 On the faith of the streamwinner, see Gethin 2001:116. The preliminary practices that lead to the attainment of streamwinning are called “the limbs for streamwinning” (*sotāpatti-y-aṅgāni*: cf above) (D 33.1.11(13)/3:227; Pm 2:189 f). The (**Sotāpatti**) **Phala S** (S 55.55) lists the following as conducing towards gaining streamwinning: association with true persons (*sappurisa*), ie true practitioners; hearing the True Teaching; skillful attention; and practice of the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma (S 55.55/5:410 f). The qualities of a *sappurisa* are given at D 33.2.3(6)/3:252, 34.1.8(7)/3:283; M 113; A 7.64/4:113, 8:38/4:144 f & at M 110.14-24/3:23 f.

In **Paññā, vuḍḍhi S** (A 5.246) these same 4 qualities are called *vuḍḍhi, dhamma*, “virtues conducive to growth” (A 5.246/2:245); cf the 5 factors of noble growth (*ariya, vuḍḍhi*), A 3:80.

<sup>482</sup> *Khīṇa, nirayo ’mhi khīṇa, tiracchāna, yoni khīṇ, petti, visayo khīṇ ’āpāya, duggati, vinipāto, sotāpanno ’ham-asmī avinipāta, dhammo niyato sambodhi, parāyaṇō ti*. D 2:93 f; S 2:68, 70, 71, 5:356, 357-360, 387, 389; A 3:211, 213, 4:405, 407 f, 182, 184.

<sup>483</sup> “Wise faith,” *avecca-p, pasāda*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlaka, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320, 8, 401, 23). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). The streamwinner’s faith is defined in **Vīmaṃsaka S** (M 47) as “his faith is strong, supported by reasons, rooted in vision” (*ākāra, vatī saddhā dassana, mūlikā dalhā*, M 47.16/ 1:320). On kinds of faith, see §5.8c n.

<sup>484</sup> Alt tr: “For the following reasons, too, he is the Blessed One [the Lord]...” On the meaning of *iti pi so*, see **Buddhānussati** = SD 15.7 (2.2) & n.

‘Of good conduct is the Blessed One’s holy community of disciples; of upright conduct is the Blessed One’s holy community of disciples; [94] of right conduct is the Blessed One’s holy community of disciples; of proper conduct is the Blessed One’s holy community of disciples. These four pairs of persons, the eight Individuals are this Blessed One’s holy community of disciples: worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms, an incomparable field of merit for the world.’

(4) He is accomplished with moral virtues dear to the noble ones,<sup>485</sup> unbroken, untorn, unmixed, spotless, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, giving rise to concentration.<sup>486</sup>

This, Ānanda, is the Dharma Mirror, by which an accomplished noble disciple, if he wishes, could by himself discern of himself, thus:

‘Destroyed is hell for me! Destroyed is the animal birth for me! Destroyed is the realm of the departed for me! Destroyed is the plane of misery, the evil destination, the lower realm! I am a streamwinner, not bound for the lower world, destined for awakening, sure of liberation, bound for awakening!’”

### The three trainings

**2.10**<sup>487</sup> Then the Blessed One, while staying in the Nādikā, gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from the mental influxes, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”

## VESĀLĪ

### Amba,pālī’s grove, Vesālī

**2.11** Now when the Blessed One had stayed at Nādikā for as long as he thought fit, he addressed the venerable Ānanda, thus:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Vesālī**.”<sup>488</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One with a large company of monks arrived in Vesālī, where the Blessed One stayed in Amba,pālī’s grove.

**2.12**<sup>489</sup> Then the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Bhikshus, a monk should dwell mindful and fully aware: this is our instruction to you.

And how, bhikshus, is a monk **mindful**?

Here,<sup>490</sup> bhikshus, a monk, having put away<sup>491</sup> covetousness and displeasure<sup>492</sup> in the world,<sup>493</sup>

<sup>485</sup> “Virtues dear to the noble ones,” *ariya,kantāni sīlāni*. The virtues of the noble one are explained at Vism 221 f. SA says that the noble ones do not violate the five precepts; hence, these virtues are dear to them (SA 2:74).

<sup>486</sup> “Unbroken, ...giving rise to concentration,” *akhaṇḍehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññūpa-satthehi aparāmaṭṭhehi samādhi,samvattanakehi*. See ŪA 268. For details, see Vism 1.143-161/51-58.

<sup>487</sup> These 2 sections [§§2.10-11]—the Brick House & Ambapālī’s grove—are unique to this Sutta.

<sup>488</sup> **Vesālī** (Skt Vaiśālī), the metropolis of the Licchavis, was the capital of the Vṛjī confederacy. It was already famous as the seat of a Solar dynasty and an important city in the Rāmāyaṇa. Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, was born in Kundagrāma (or Kundapura), a suburb of Vaiśālī (Sūtra Kṛtaṅga 1.2.3) and the residence of the Nāṭṭ or Nāṭa clan to which he belonged. This suburb was divided into a northern sector that was *ḷṣatriya* and a southern sector that was *brāhmaṇa*. Vaiśālī has been identified with modern Besarh, 35 km (20 mi) north of Hajipur, in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. The site of the ancient city is called Rāja Viśal ka garh. Excavations have revealed pottery, terracottas, clay seals, and other objects, confirming the location of Vaiśālī, and attesting occupation during four periods between 500 BCE and 500 CE. (J Finegan, *An Archaeological History of Religions of Indian Asia*, 1989:83).

<sup>489</sup> As at 2.26. The following sections [§§2.12-13] as at **Sato S** (S 47.2/5:142), whose teaching is also found in **Gelaṅṅa S 1** (S 36.7/4:211). The **Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra** (with a touch of humour?) inserts this episode as the Buddha’s admonition to the monks as Āmrāpālī approaches (MPS:Waldschmidt 10.7-15).

<sup>490</sup> See §2.26 where this same passage explains the meaning of “taking yourself as refuge.”

(1) dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful,<sup>494</sup> observing body in the body, [94]

(2) ...he dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful observing feeling in the feelings.

(3) ...he dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, observing mind in the mind.

(4) Having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, the monk dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, observing mind-object in the mind-objects.

This, bhikshus, is how a monk is mindful.

**2.13** And how, bhikshus, is a monk **fully aware**?

Here, bhikshus, a monk

(1) while going forward or back, he is fully aware of what he is doing;

(2) while looking forward or back, he is fully aware of what he is doing.

(3) while bending or stretching, he is fully aware of what he is doing.

(4) while carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl, he is fully aware of what he is doing.

(5) while eating, drinking, chewing and tasting, he is fully aware of what he is doing.

(6) while voiding or peeing, he is fully aware of what he is doing.

(7) while walking, while standing, while sitting, while asleep, while awake,<sup>495</sup> while talking, or while remaining silent, he is fully aware of what he is doing.

This, bhikshus, is how a monk is fully aware.

Bhikshus, a monk should dwell mindful and fully aware: this is our instruction to you.

## Amba,pālī

**2.14**<sup>496</sup> Then the courtesan **Amba,pālī**<sup>497</sup> heard that the Blessed One had arrived in Vesālī and was staying there at her mango grove.

<sup>491</sup> *Vineyya*, this means that the five hindrances have to be abandoned *prior* to practising *satipaṭṭhāna*. This is because the hindrances, in the form of mental impurities (*cetaso upakkilesa*), weaken wisdom (*paññāya dubbhālī, karaṇe*) (D 2:83, 3:49, 101, A 2:211, 3:93, 100, 386 f, Vbh 245, 256).

<sup>492</sup> “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassam*. MA says that covetousness and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the observance of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances.

<sup>493</sup> “World” (*loka*). The Vibhaṅga says: “This very body is the world, and the five aggregates of clinging (ie form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness) are the world—this is called the world.” (Vbh 195).

<sup>494</sup> “Exertive, fully aware, mindful,” *ātāpī sampajāno satimā* (D 3:58, 77, 141, 211, 276 = M 1:56 ff (MA 1:243), 2:11 = S 5:141-143 (SA 3:180) = A 4:300, 457 = Pm 41 (PmA 175) = Vbh 193 f (VbhA 219 f). These stock terms are def at Vbh 194, 196 = 202; Vism 3; DA 363; MA 1:244; SA 1:204; AA 2:42; ItA 1:105; SnA 157; ApA 310. *Ātāpī* refers to right effort: (1) preventing negative states (*samvara, padhāna*); (2) overcoming them (*pahāna, padhāna*); (3) cultivating wholesome states (*bhāvanā, padhāna*); (4) maintaining them (*anurakkhanā, padhāna*) (A 2:74, 16, 15).

<sup>495</sup> “When asleep, when awake,” *sutte jāgarite* = **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.8/1:57) = SD 13.3. Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, sleeping.” *Sutte* is often erroneously rendered as “falling asleep,” which is *niddam okkamati*. Similarly, *jāgarite* refers to the state of being awake, not to “waking or rising from sleep” (*pabujjhati*). “The practice of mindfulness focused on sleeping means one uses the old experience, now past, of having been asleep as the focus of superpower mindfulness **now**. It is mindfulness taking an old experience as its object. This may sound pedantic to you now, but it becomes crucially important, as you will see when I explain the focus of mindfulness on the *citta* (mind-consciousness).” (Brahmavamso 2002:26, 32-34). See header §C n.

<sup>496</sup> The foll §§ [2.14-19] as at V 1:231-33 but differs as to location. Rhys Davids notes: “From this point down to the words ‘he rose from his seat,’ in [§2.19, RD errs, giving it as ‘II, 24’] is, with a few unimportant variations, word for word the same as **Vinaya**, vol I, pp 231-3. But the passage there follows immediately after the verses translated above I, 34, so that the events here (in §§14-18) localized at Vesālī, are there localized at Koṭigāma. Our §II,5 is then inserted between our sections II,18 and II,19; and our section II,11 does not occur at all, the Exalted One only reaching Ambapālī’s grove when he goes there (as in our section II,19) to partake of the meal to which he had been invited. Buddhaghosa passes over this apparent discrepancy in silence.” (D:RD 2:102 n1; emphasis added.) In other words, the V account here puts **the Ambapālī episode** at Koṭigāma (after which the Buddha heads for Nāṭikā or Nāḍikā). It could be conjectured here that §§2.1-13 have been interpolated, probably after Buddhaghosa’s time. Even so, it does not mean that these passages are unhistorical. Alternatively, it is possible that the Vinaya reciters have the wrong location.

Then the courtesan Ambapālī, having had magnificent carriages prepared, mounted a carriage, left Vesālī with the magnificent carriages and headed for her park. Having gone in her carriage as far as the ground would permit, she alighted from her carriage and went on foot to where the Blessed One was.

Having approached the Blessed One and saluted him, she sat down at one side. When the courtesan Ambapālī was thus seated at one side, the Blessed One then instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened her with a Dharma talk.<sup>498</sup>

Then the courtesan Ambapālī, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened with a Dharma talk of the Blessed One, said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One together with the order of monks accept a meal from me tomorrow.”  
The Blessed One consented by his silence.

Then, the courtesan Ambapālī, understanding that the Blessed One had consented (to the invitation), rose from her seat and left.

### Ambapālī’s lion-roar<sup>499</sup>

**2.15** Now the Licchavīs<sup>500</sup> of Vesālī heard that the Blessed One [96] had arrived in Vesālī and was staying in Ambapālī’s grove.

Then the Licchavīs of Vesālī, having had magnificent carriages prepared, mounted their carriages, left Vesālī in the magnificent carriages. Now, some of the Licchavīs were blue, blue in colour, dressed in blue, with blue ornaments; some of the Licchavīs were yellow, yellow in colour, dressed in yellow, with yellow ornaments; some of the Licchavīs were red, red in colour, dressed in red, with red ornaments; some of the Licchavīs were white, white in colour, dressed in white, with white ornaments.<sup>501</sup>

**2.16** Then the Licchavī youths rode [racing and knocking each others’ carriages] axle to axle, wheel to wheel, yoke to yoke against the courtesan Ambapālī. Then the Licchavīs said this to the courtesan Ambapālī:

“Hey,<sup>502</sup> Ambapālī, why are you riding axle to axle, wheel to wheel, yoke to yoke against Licchavī youths?”<sup>503</sup>

“Because, young sirs, I have invited the Blessed One together with the order for a meal tomorrow!”

“Hey, Ambapālī, give up this meal (to us) for a hundred thousand (pieces of money)!”<sup>504</sup>

“Young sirs, even if you were to give me Vesālī with all its territories,<sup>505</sup> I would not give you such a great meal!”

<sup>497</sup> Ambapālī is Vesālī’s celebrated courtesan or geisha (*gaṇikā* or *gaṇakī*). She has a son Vimala Koṇḍañña who becomes a monk and arhat, after listening to whom she joins, too, joins the order (Thī 252-270; ThīA 206 f). See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:9.14-15.

<sup>498</sup> See §1.25 n above.

<sup>499</sup> This episode of Ambapālī’s encounter with the Licchavīs [§2.16] is absent from the Tibetan Dulva version, where the Buddha, on seeing Amrapālī approaching in the distance, warns, “Bhikshus, Amrapālī is coming! Be mindful, wise, and thoughtful.” The Licchavīs separately visit the Buddha. (Rockhill 1884:128 f).

<sup>500</sup> **The Licchavī** was one of the main tribes, the most important and powerful, forming the Vṛjī confederacy. They were the founders of Vaiśālī. On their qualities that kept them strong and successful as a people, see §1.4 & also **Kaliṅgara S** (S 20.8/2:267 f). See DPPN: Licchavī.

<sup>501</sup> These colours are also those of the devas of Susīma’s host: see **Susīma S** (S 2.29/1:64 f) as mentioned it is Saṃyutta Comy (SA 1:125): cf SD 12.12 Intro. These colours probably represented the various Licchavī clans. Dīgha Comy notes that the whole Licchavī tribe would join in any ceremony held in the Licchavī house, and that they would all unite in honouring any distinguished visitors to their city (DA 2:521): see “condition for non-decline” (*aparihāniya, dhamma*) no 7 [§1.4]. This is probably the reason for the enthusiasm of the Licchavī youth in honouring the Buddha and the order with a meal offering.

<sup>502</sup> “Hey,” *je*, exclamation: Oh! Ah! Now then! (V 1:232, 292 *gaccha je*; M 1:126; DhA 4:105; VvA 187, 207. It is possible that *je* is cognate with *jaya* (Success! Victory!) or modern Hindi *jai*. As such, it is a cordial greeting. Here I follow M:NB 220 (M 21.9/1:126).

<sup>503</sup> Note a tone of pride in the speech of the Licchavī youths.

<sup>504</sup> It is interesting why the Licchavīs do not opt for another day, say the following, to invite the Buddha for alms. Perhaps they are vying for the first alms offering to the Buddha in Vesālī on this occasion. It is also likely that the Buddha would leave Vesālī the day after Ambapālī’s alms offering.



Then the Licchavī youths snapped their fingers,<sup>506</sup> saying:

“Alas! We have been beaten by this Ambakā!<sup>507</sup> Alas! We are defeated by this mango woman!”

Then the Licchavī youths headed for Ambapālī’s grove.

**2.17** Now the Blessed One saw the Licchavīs coming from afar, and he said this to the monks:

“Bhikshus, those who have never seen the Thirty-three gods, just look<sup>508</sup> at [97] the troop of Licchavīs. Look<sup>509</sup> at them, and you will have a good idea<sup>510</sup> of the host of the Thirty-three gods!”<sup>511</sup>

**2.18** Then the Licchavīs, having gone in their carriages as far as the ground would permit, alighted from their carriages and went on foot to where the Blessed One was.

Having approached the Blessed One and saluted him, they sat down at one side. When the Licchavīs were thus seated at one side, the Blessed One then instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with a Dharma talk.

Then the Licchavīs, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened with a Dharma talk of the Blessed One,<sup>512</sup> said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One together with the order of monks accept a meal from us tomorrow.”

“Licchavīs, we have consented to a meal from the courtesan Ambapālī tomorrow.”

Then the Licchavī youths snapped their fingers, saying:

“Alas! We have been beaten by this Ambakā! Alas! We are defeated by this mango woman!”

Then the Licchavīs, having rejoiced in the Blessed One’s word and approved of it, rose from their seats, and keeping their right side to him, left.

**2.19a** Then the courtesan Ambapālī, by the end of the night,<sup>513</sup> having prepared excellent foods, hard and soft, announced to the Blessed One that it was time:

“Bhante, it is time for the meal.”

Then, the Blessed One, having dressed himself in the morning and taking robe and bowl, went, along with the order of monks, to Ambapālī’s house, and sat down on the prepared seat. Then the courtesan

<sup>505</sup> “With all its territories,” *s’āhāram* = *sa āhāra* (D 2:96), possibly, “with all its tributary states.” Comy glosses it as *sa.janapadam*, “with its states/regions” (DA 2:545). At **Bīja S** (S 22.54/3:54) *viññāna*~, “consciousness with its food/nutriments”: see “The Radiant Mind,” SD 8.3.9. PED here: “with its subject territory.” BHSD gives “(3) district, province: Māy 28 [Mvy 28?]; see Hultzs, Aśoka, 163 n11.”

<sup>506</sup> “(They) snapped their fingers,” *anṅulī pothesunī*, which Buddhaghosa glosses as *anṅulī cālesunī*, “they shook their fingers” (VA 1097 = DA 2:545). DPL (Childers), under *potheti*, defines *anṅuliyō potheti* as “to snap the fingers as a token of pleasure” (qu James D’Alwis, *An Introduction to Kaccāyana’s Grammar of the Pali Language*, Colombo, 1863, 1:75). *Anṅulī* is clearly “fingers,” so CPD def of *anṅulī,potha* as “clapping the hands” (J 5:67) is problematic; but under *anṅulī pothesum* (D 2:96) gives “snapped their fingers.” BHSD defines the Buddhist Skt cognate *sphoṭā* as “snap of the fingers” (*Saddharma.puṇḍarīka*, ed Kern & Nanjio, 1912:388.9 prose). It might be surmised here that the Licchavī youths (being youthful) are responding to their “failure” by good-natured snapping their fingers rather than reacting dismally. After all, considering their youthful and tribal pride, it is very likely they regard making an offering to the Buddha as a matter of prestige than an act of merit. But cf §2.15n above on the Licchavīs.

<sup>507</sup> *Ambakā*, “mango woman” (D 2:96; V 1:232; A 3:349) and is related to *ambā* (= *ammā*), “mother” (Abhp 244; Kaccv 115, Sadd 652, Moggv 2:63). This word is mentioned twice here and is clearly a word play. As such, I have used the Pali in the first instance, and tr it in the second. The word is also found in *satt’ambakā cetiya*, the Shrine of the Seven Women [§3.2].

<sup>508</sup> *Oloketha*, “Look!”

<sup>509</sup> *Avaloketha*, “Look! Regard!” *Avaloketi* also tr “he looks back (at).” This verb is more common than *oloketha*. Cf *apaloketi*, “he looks back (at)” [§4.1 & n].

<sup>510</sup> “Have a good idea,” *upasaṃharatha* fr *upasaṃharati*; here meaning “compare.” See its range of meanings in CPD.

<sup>511</sup> This comparison also at DhA 3:280.

<sup>512</sup> At this point, the Tibetan Dulva version adds that “When he had finished speaking, a Brahman youth called Kapila (*Ser-skya*) rose up (f 559<sup>a</sup>) and said, ‘Blessed One, may I venture; Tathāgata, may I give vent (to my feelings)?’ When the Buddha permits him, Kapila sings 3 stanzas praising the Buddha. The Licchavīs are so pleased with him that each of them gives him the cloak they are wearing. Again the Buddha instructed them the Dharma. Gladdened at the Buddha’s word, the Licchavīs invite the Buddha for the meal on the morrow, but the Buddha tells them of his prior acceptance of Amrapālī’s invitation. Having saluted the Buddha, the Licchavīs then leave.

<sup>513</sup> Cf §1.30a n above.

Ambapālī, with her own hands, served the order of monks with the Buddha at its head, with excellent foods, hard and soft, and waited on them.

Then when the Blessed One had finished his meal and taken his hand out of the bowl, the courtesan Ambapālī took a low seat and sat down [98] at one side.

**2.19b** And when the courtesan Ambapālī was seated thus, she said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, I give this park to the order of monks with the Buddha at its head.”<sup>514</sup>

The Blessed One accepted the park.

Then after the Blessed One had instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened the courtesan Ambapālī with a Dharma talk, she rose from her seat and left.

### The three trainings

**2.20** Then the Blessed One, while staying in the Vesālī, gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from the mental influxes, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”

## BELUVA

### The Buddha’s last rains retreat

**2.21** Now when the Blessed One had stayed at Ambapālī’s park for as long as he thought fit, he addressed the venerable Ānanda, thus:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to the hamlet of **Beluva**.”<sup>515</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One with a large company of monks arrived in the hamlet of Beluva. The Blessed One stayed at the hamlet of Beluva.

[Ten months before the Mahā Parinirvana.]<sup>516</sup>

**2.22**<sup>517</sup> Then the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Bhikshus, stay for **the rains retreat**<sup>518</sup> around Vesālī where you have friends or acquaintances or supporters. I will spend the rains retreat here in the hamlet of Beluva.”

<sup>514</sup> The Sarvāstivāda version & Tibetan Dulva do not mention this, only saying that the Buddha praises the meal.

<sup>515</sup> That is, the hamlet of Beluva, **Beluva, gāma** (Skt Bilva, grāmaka) or Veḷuva (Skt Veṇu, grāmaka), near Vesālī (Skt Vaiśālī).

<sup>516</sup> Buddhaghosa, probably aware of the discrepancy of dates, assigns this episode to the 10<sup>th</sup> month before the Buddha’s parinirvana (DA 2:547 = SA 3:202). The SA Poraṇa Ṭikā says that the Buddha went into “fruition attainment (*phala, samāpatti*)” [Vism 23], by which life is vitalized, sustained, prolonged... He entered the attainment with the determination, ‘Let the pain not arise for another ten months,’ and the pain, suppressed by the attainment, did not arise for another ten months” (qu at S:B 1920 n138). BDict: **Phala**, as “path-result” or “fruition,” it denotes those moments of supermundane consciousness which flash forth immediately after the moment of path-consciousness and which, till the attainment of the next higher path, may during the practice of Insight (*vipassanā*) still recur innumerable times. If thus repeated, they are called the “attainment of fruition” (*phala, samāpatti*). Cf §2.23 n. On the discrepancy of the dates of the Buddha’s parinirvana, see **Intro (9d)** above.

<sup>517</sup> The foll [§§2.22-26], with a slightly modified narrative Intro, is found in (**Bhagavā**) **Gilāna S** (S 47.9/5: 152-54).

<sup>518</sup> The Buddha spends his **last rains retreat** here. As it is the month of Āsāḷha (Āṣāḍha, June-July), with the rains approaching, the Buddha and the order enter the rains retreat (his last) at Beluva. The Buddha instructs the monks to spend retreat in groups in different places all around Vesālī. According to the Sarvāstivāda version & Tibetan Dulva, this is in response to a bad famine that has occurred there. The Pali version, however, makes no mention of any famine. The Commentary simply states that the small village where the Buddha spends retreat is neither able to accommodate nor feed so many monks. (DA 2:546)

“Yes, bhante,” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One, and they spent the rains retreat around Vesālī where they had friends or acquaintances or [99] supporters, and the Blessed One spent the rains retreat there in the hamlet of Beluva.

### The Buddha’s first serious illness

**2.23** <sup>519</sup>Now when the Blessed One had entered the rains retreat, **a serious illness**<sup>520</sup> arose in him, with severe pains, as if he were about to die. But he endured all this mindfully and fully aware, and without complaining.

Then it occurred to the Blessed One,

“It is not fitting that I should attain parinirvana without addressing my supporters and taking leave of the order of monks. I must make an effort to ward off this illness and dwell, having determined the life-force.”<sup>521</sup>

Then the Blessed One made an effort to ward off the illness and dwelled, having determined the life-force. Then the Blessed One’s illness abated.

**2.24** <sup>522</sup>Then the Blessed One recovered from the illness. Not long after recovering from the illness, he came out of his dwelling and sat down on the prepared seat in the shade of the dwelling.<sup>523</sup>

Then the venerable Ānanda went up to the Blessed One and having saluted him, sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, I have seen the Blessed One in comfort, and I have seen the Blessed One enduring it. And, bhante, my body has become weak [unwieldy] as if drugged [drunk].<sup>524</sup> I’m disoriented and things are unclear to me as a result of the Blessed One’s illness.<sup>525</sup>

<sup>519</sup> This whole section [§§2.23-25] has the following in **the Tibetan version**: “Ānanda, I do not have the idea that the order of monks is mine, that I must cleave to the order and lead it, so how should I have a last exhortation, even a slight one, with which to instruct the order? Whatever teachings I have had which were relevant to the order of monks, I have already taught them as the principles which must be practised, namely, [the 4 focusses of mindfulness, the 4 right efforts, the 4 bases of success, the 5 faculties, the 5 powers, the 7 awakening-factors, the noble eightfold path]. As Buddha I do not have the closed-fistedness of a teacher who thinks he must conceal things as unsuitable to others.” (Snellgrove, BSOAS 36, 1973:401)

<sup>520</sup> The “severe illness” here [as at §4.20] shows symptoms of dysentery. Winternitz (1939:9) says that this section [§2.23] is amongst those that “bear the stamp of the greatest antiquity.” At §3.10 the Buddha however relinquishes his lifespan. See also §§2.25 & 5.13 f.

<sup>521</sup> *Atha kho Bhagavato etad ahoṣi: Na kho me taṃ paṭirūpaṃ yo ’haṃ anāmantetvā upaṭṭhāke anapaloketvā bhikkhu, saṅghaṃ parinibbāyeyyaṃ. Yan nunā ’haṃ imaṃ ābādhaṃ viriyena paṭippanāmetvā jīvita, saṅkhāraṃ adhiṭṭhāya vihareyyaṃ ti.* It appears that Nāgasena (Miln 141) and the Sarvāstivādins take this episode to mean that the Buddha is actually at the point of dying, and so by sheer will power extended his life for at least 3 more months (to the end of the rains retreat). Note, however, that no duration is mentioned here, but see See §2.22 n where this episode is said to be 10 months before the parinirvana; cf §3.9. The Skt texts says that the Buddha extends his life here so that Supriya and Subhadra could meet him: **see Intro (9e)** above.

Comys, however, say that the Buddha did not let go of his life-formation like a ball of clay from his hand, but for exactly 3 months he entered upon the attainment of the fruits (*phala, samāpatti*), thinking, “I will not enter upon them for any longer than that” (DA 556; SA 3:253; UA 327). For a different opinion, see Jaini 1958 (2001:193). It should be noted, however, that this life-extension is different from the one mentioned at the Cāpāla Shrine [§3.3]. See also Intro (9).

<sup>522</sup> This whole episode missing in the Tibetan Dulva version.

<sup>523</sup> “In the shade of the dwelling,” *viḥāra, pacchāyāyaṃ*. D:W renders it as “in front of his dwelling,” probably from misreading *pacchā* (behind, back, after, afterwards, westward). Actually the word here is *pacchāyā* (shade, a shaded place) (V 1:180, 2:193; D 1:152 = *chāyā*, DA 1:310, 2:205; A 3:320).

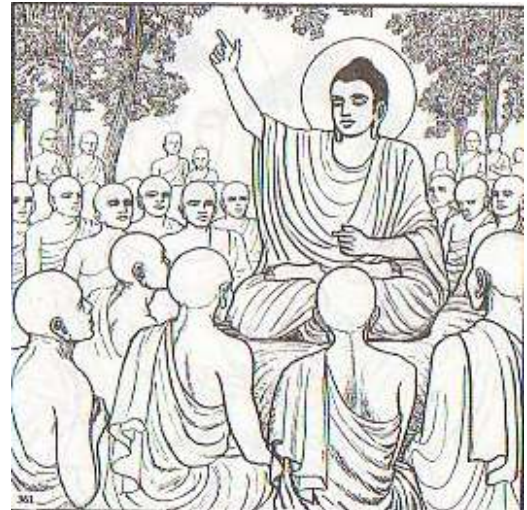
<sup>524</sup> “My body... is as if drugged,” *me... madhuraka, jāto viya kāyo*. Ānanda expresses the same sentiments at the parinirvana of Sāriputta (**Cunda (Samaṇ’uddesa) S**, S 47.13/5:162), reflected in his **Thera, gāthā**: “All the quarters have become dim; the teachings are unclear to me. | My spiritual friend has gone, and everything is cast in darkness” (Tha 1034). “The old ones have passed away. I do not get on with the new ones. | Today I meditate all alone, like a bird gone to its nest” (Tha:N 94 = Tha 1036). DPL says that *madhuraka* is “the Jivaka plant,” quoting Abhidhānapadīpikā (ed W Subhūti), 1865:594. This probably led Rhys Davids to render it here as “my body has become weak as a creeper,” but PED (W Stede?) rejects as erroneous (sv Madhuraka), saying that the usual tr has been “become

Only this much comfort have I, thinking: ‘The Blessed One will not pass into parinirvana until he has made some statement [pronouncement] concerning the order of monks.’” [100]

**2.25a** <sup>526c</sup> Ānanda, what does the order of monks expect of me? I have taught the Dharma, Ānanda, making no distinction between inner and outer:<sup>527</sup> **the Tathagata has no ‘guru’s fist’<sup>528</sup>** in respect of teachings.

**2.25b** Surely, Ānanda, if there were anyone who thinks: ‘I (*aham*) shall take care of [look after] the order,’<sup>529</sup> that ‘The order should refer to me (*maṃ*),’<sup>530</sup> then let him make some statement about the order. But, Ānanda, it does not occur to the Tathāgata to think, ‘I shall take care of the order,’ that ‘The order should refer to me.’ So why should the Tathāgata make a statement about the order?<sup>531</sup>

**2.25c** Ānanda, I am now old, aged, great in years, my journey done, I have reached the sum of my days, I am turning eighty.<sup>532</sup> Ānanda, just as an old cart is kept going by being held together with straps, even so the Tathāgata’s body is kept going by being strapped up.<sup>533</sup>



languid or weak.” Comys paraphrase *madhuraka* as: “it has become heavy” (*sañjāta,garu,bhāvo*, AA 3:259); “it has become unwieldy, as if heavy” (*sañjāta,garu,bhāvo viya akammañño*, SA 2:309); “it has become unwieldy, stiff, like a person impaled with a stake” (*sañjāta,garu,bhāvo sañjāta,thaddha,bhāvo sūle uttāsita,puriso viya*, DA 2:547, SA 3:203; *Madhuraka* also means “sweet, pleasant, charming,” but PED gives it as “full of sweet drink, intoxicated.” For *madhuraka viya kāya*, see **D 16.2.24/2:99**; **S 22.84/3:106 f**, **47.9/5:153**, **47.13/5:162**; **A 5.56/3:70 f** (*madhuraka c’eva kāya*); also UA 246. See also S:W 3:90 n2 & S:B 1078 n149.

<sup>525</sup> *Disā’pi me na pakkhāyanti, dhammā pi maṃ na paṭibhanti bhagavato gelaññena*: **D 16.2.24/2:99**; **S 22.84/3:106 f**, **47.9/5:153**, **47.13/5:162**; **A 5.56/3:70 f** (*madhuraka c’eva kāya*); also UA 246. See also S:W 3:90 n2 & S:B 1078 n149. On “things are unclear to me,” *dhammā pi maṃ na paṭibhanti*, cf A 5.56/3:69. For a psychological expl on Ānanda’s reaction, see **Udakūpama S** (A 7.15) = SD 28.6 Intro (1.2.5).

<sup>526</sup> Winternitz (1939:9) says that this section [§2.25] is amongst those that “bear the stamp of the greatest antiquity.” See also §§2.23 & 5.13 f.

<sup>527</sup> Comys: “Making no distinction between inner and outer,” *anantaram abāhiram karitvā*. Comys explain it as making no distinction of either inner or outer by way of the Dharma or by way of persons. Making an ‘inner’ of the Dharma means to teach, thinking, ‘This much Dharma I will not teach others.’ Making an ‘outer’ of the Dharma means to teach, thinking, ‘I will teach this much to others.’ Making an ‘inner’ of the person means to teach, thinking, ‘I will teach this person.’ Making an ‘outer’ of the person means to teach, thinking, ‘I will not teach this (person).’ Thus he teaches without making a distinction. This is the meaning.” (DA 2:547 = SA 3:203). On these twofold distinction, see Miln 1145 f, 159 f. See foll n.

<sup>528</sup> *N’atthi ācariya,muṭṭhi*. Comys: “The guru’s fist is found amongst outsiders who do not tell certain things to their pupils when they are still boys (*dahara,kāle*), who keep certain teachings for their beloved and favourite pupils, telling it to them only at the last moment from their deathbed. The Tathāgata does not hold back anything, keeping a closed fist, thinking, ‘I will teach this in my old age, at the last moment.’” (DA 2:548 = SA 3:203 f)

<sup>529</sup> *Aham bhikkhu,saṅgham pariharissāmi ti*: Walshe tr *pariharissāmi* as “take charge of” (D:W 245). On apparent contradiction regarding *pariharissāmi* (wrongly tr as “I will lead”), cf **Cātumā S** (M 67.13/4 :459) = SD 34.7, where it has a different sense. On how the Buddha addresses him, using *tathāgata* and *aham*, see **Cūḷa Mālunkya,-putta S** (M 63) = SD 5.8 Intro (3).

<sup>530</sup> *Mam’uddesiko bhikkhu,saṅgho ti*.

<sup>531</sup> On tr of “shall take care of” (*pariharissāmi*), see **Cātumā S** (M 67) = SD 34.7 Intro (2).

<sup>532</sup> *Aham kho pan’ānanda, etarahi jinno vuddho mahallako addha’gato vayo’anuppatto, āsūtikō me vayo vattati*. See §5.27.

<sup>533</sup> “By being strapped,” *veṭha,missakena*, following Norman and Bodhi. See Tha:N 143 n & S:B 1920 n141. Bodhi also notes that if Comys (SA 2:425; ApA 58, 358; J 1:63) were right in saying that Ānanda was born on the same day as the Bodhisattva, this passage would hardly make sense, “for the Buddha would not need to insist on the frailties of old age if Ānanda too was an old man” (S:B id). Bodhi thinks that Ānanda “must have been considerably younger than the Buddha, perhaps by as much as thirty years” (S:B 804 n296). It is interesting that the Tibetan source-



Ānanda, it is only when the Tathāgata pays no attention to all the signs and by the ending of certain feelings, enters and dwells in *the signless concentration of mind*,<sup>534</sup> that the Tathāgata's body knows comfort.

### Self as refuge

**2.26** Therefore, Ānanda, **dwelt with yourself as an island, with yourself as refuge, with no other refuge—dwell with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as refuge, with no other refuge.**<sup>535</sup>

And how does a monk dwell with himself as an island, with himself as refuge, with no other refuge. And how, Ānanda, does a monk dwell with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as refuge, with no other refuge?

Here,<sup>536</sup> Ānanda, a monk, having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world,

(1) dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, observing body in the body,

(2) ...dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful observing feeling in the feelings.

(3) ...dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, observing mind in the mind.

(4) Having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, the monk dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful, observing mind-object in the mind-objects.

That, Ānanda, is how a monk dwell with himself as an island, with himself as refuge, with no other refuge—dwell with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as refuge, with no other refuge. [101]

Ānanda, those who now in my time or after me, would dwell with himself as an island, with himself as refuge, with no other refuge; dwell with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as refuge, with no other refuge—they become the highest,<sup>537</sup> but, Ānanda, they must be those who desire to learn [who have desire for training].<sup>538</sup>

## Chapter 3

(Third Recital, *tatiya bhāṇavāra*)

### CĀPĀLA SHRINE

### The Buddha's love of tree shrines

es (eg the Dulva or Vinaya) says that Ānanda is the same age as Rāhula (Rockhill 57), which should be a good age for one to be the Buddha's life-long personal attendant. On the differences of opinion regarding Ānanda's age amongst the early Buddhist schools, see C Witanachchi, "Ānanda," *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* 1:529. See also Thomas 1949:123; Rhys Davids' article on "Devadatta" in ERE; DPPN 1:268.

<sup>534</sup> "The signless concentration of mind," *animittam ceto,samādhiṃ*. Bodhi notes that this samadhi "must be different from the one with the same name mentioned at [Animitta S, S 40.9/4:268 f]" (S:B 1921 n141). The Saṃyutta Comy (SA 3:90) on Animitta S explains it as deep insight concentration, the present one as fruition attainment (*phala,samāpatti*), which would then identify it with the *animittam ceto,samādhiṃ* here. Comy of Mahā Parinibbāna S simply says it is "fruition attainment" (DA 2:548). On the Buddha's first serious illness, see §2.23 n.

<sup>535</sup> *Tasmā-t-ih'Ānanda atta,dīpā viharatha atta,saraṇā anañña,saraṇā, dhamma,dīpā dhamma,saraṇā anañña,-saraṇā* (D 16.2.26/2:100 = 26.1/3:58, 26.27/77; S 22.43/3:42, 47.9/5:154, 47.13/5:163, 47.14/5:164): many of them at different venues and to different interlocutors. On the tr of *dīpa* here as "island" or as "lamp" & discussion, see **Intro (6a)** above.

<sup>536</sup> As at §2.12. This well known passage is from **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.1/2:290) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.3/1:55). At §2.12 this passage defines "how a monk is mindful." See nn there.

<sup>537</sup> "The highest," *tama-t-agge* ("the highest"): Comy gives a long expl, the essence of which is "cutting off all yokes to darkness (ignorance)" (*sabbaṃ tama,yogaṃ chinditvā*, DA 548); also at S 47.9/5:154, where Comy takes it as *tama-agge*, with the infix *-t-* as euphonic junction (*pada,sandhi*): see S:B 1921 n143. Bodhi notes that this word is not found in the fragments of the Turfan Skt version, but the Tib and Chin parallels, probably based on Skt texts, point to a meaning as "the highest" (S:B 1921 n143). See also Vajira & Story n20.

<sup>538</sup> *Ye keci sikkhā,kāmā ti*, D 2:101/3:58, 77; S 3:42, 5:154, 163, 164.

[102] 3.1 <sup>539</sup>Then, when it was morning, the Blessed One dressed and, taking bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms.<sup>540</sup> Having walked in Vesālī for alms, he had his meal, after which he addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Bring along a mat, Ānanda. We will go to the Cāpāla Shrine<sup>541</sup> for the midday rest.<sup>542</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One. Holding the mat, the venerable Ānanda followed the Blessed One as he walked.<sup>543</sup>

3.2 Then the Blessed One, having arrived at the Cāpāla Shrine, sat down on the prepared seat. Then the venerable Ānanda, having saluted the Blessed One, sat down at one side. When the venerable Ānanda was thus seated at one side, the Blessed One said this to him:

“Ānanda, delightful<sup>544</sup> is Vesālī, delightful is the Udena Shrine, delightful is the Gotamaka Shrine, delightful is the Satt’ambaka Shrine [of the Seven Women], delightful is the Bahu,puttaka Shrine [of Many Sons], delightful is the Cāpāla Shrine.<sup>545</sup> [103]

### **The Buddha’s lifespan**

3.3 Ānanda, whoever has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power,<sup>546</sup> made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even,<sup>547</sup> could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.<sup>548</sup>

<sup>539</sup> This episode of the Buddha’s relinquishment of the rest of his lifespan at the Cāpāla shrine [§§3.1-10] is found in **Cetiya S** (S 51.10/5:258-263)—SA 3:251-255 parallel DA 2:554-558—and **Āyu,sama S** (U 6.1/62-64), commented on at UA 322-330; also at Nett 60. This episode and the subsequent earth-tremors (*bhūmi,cāla*) [§§3.1-20] are found in **Bhūmi,cālā S** (A 8.70/4:308-313).

<sup>540</sup> Comy says that the Buddha has just left Ukkacelā and here enters Vesālī. Ukkacelā is not mentioned anywhere in this sutta. Comy also implicitly says that the teachings given here are recorded in **Ukkacelā S** (S 47.14/5:163-165; SA 3:225; J 1:391). (DA 2:554)

<sup>541</sup> “**Cāpāla Shrine**,” *Cāpāla,cetiya*. The Ānguttara Comy says that during the first 20 years of the Buddha’s ministry, he used to stayed the various shrines—the Cāpāla shrine, the Udena shrine, the shrine of Seven Mangos, the shrine of Many Sons, the Sārandanda shrine [3.2]—mentioned here (AA 2:373). All these shrines were said to be beautiful spots (D 2:102 f, 118, 3:9; S 5:159, 260; A 4:309; U 62). They were tree shrines (*rukka,cetiya*) where people sought refuge when they were in fear or where they prayed to have their wishes fulfilled (DhA 3:246). The Buddha has lived much of his life in the open and encourages his disciples to live the solitary forest life to expedite their spiritual practice. **The Cāpāla Shrine** was once the haunt of the yaksha Cāpāla, but later a residence (*vihāra*) was built there for the Buddha’s use (UA 323). Faxian found a pagoda there and relates a story in connection with it (*Travels of Fa Hsien* [Fogouji:G], tr HA Giles, Cambridge, 1923:43). **The Udena Shrine**, on the east of Vesālī, was dedicated to the yaksha Udena (DA 2:554; UA 323). **The Gotamaka Shrine**, on the south of Vesālī (D 3:9), was dedicated to the yaksha Gotamaka (AA 2:373). It is here that the Buddha lays down the rule allowing the use of three robes (V 3:195): the three robes are used to keep the monks warm of cold days (V 1:288). **The Shrine of Seven Women** (*satt’ambaka cetiya*), to the west of Vesālī, was so called after seven princesses, the daughters of Kiki, king of Benares, experience religious urgency (*saṃvega*), left the palace and carried out spiritual practice here (UA 323). The **Vessantara J** (J 522) says king Kiki lived during the time of Kassapa Buddha (the just Buddha before ours) and that the women were reborn in our Buddha’s time as Khemā, Uppalavaṇṇā, Pañcārā, Gotamī, Dhamma,dinnā, Mahāmāyā and Visākhā (J 6:481). The word *ambakā* here means “woman” (V 1:232; D 2:96 in ref to Ambapālī [§2.16]; A 3:349) and is related to *ambā* (= *ammā*), “mother” (Abhp 244; Kaccv 115, Sadd 652, Moggv 2:63). **The Shrine of Many Sons** (*bahu,putta cetiya*), to the north of Vesālī, had a banyan tree with numerous branches, to which people who wanted to have children would come to pray for it (U 6.1/62 f; DA 2:102, 3:10; SA 5:259 f; UA 323). On the shrine (*cetiya*), see Intro (7c).

<sup>542</sup> “For the midday rest,” *diva,vihārāya*. The term *diva,vihāra*, lit “day residence” has sometimes been tr as “siesta” (D:W 246), but the word suggests that it is a time for a nap. The Buddha often speaks against monastics sleeping in the day time (D 3:185\*; cf V 1:295). There are many references to monks and nuns resting in meditation during such a midday rest (S 1:128 f, 130, 131 f).

<sup>543</sup> “Followed... as he walked,” *piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubandhi*. See §1.32 (D 2:89).

<sup>544</sup> “Delightful,” *ramaṇīyā*, alt tr “beautiful, charming.” This shows that the Buddha appreciates natural beauty, here def as any quality that conduces to mental peace, stability and clarity uninfluenced by greed, hate or delusion. See *Vedanā* = SD 3.2.

<sup>545</sup> On each of these shrines, see §3.1n.

Ānanda, the Tathāgata is one who has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of a lifespan.

Ānanda, if the Tathāgata so wishes, he could remain for the life-span or the rest of a lifespan.”<sup>549</sup>

**3.4** But even though the venerable Ānanda was given such a clear sign by the Blessed One, though he was given such a broad hint, he was unable to understand it. He did not beseech the Blessed One, “Bhante, let the Blessed One stay on through the lifespan, let the Sugata [Wellfarer] stay on through the lifespan for the benefit of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of gods and humans”—to that extent his mind was seized by Māra.<sup>550</sup>

**3.5** For the second time, the Blessed One said this to him *dropping the same hint but Ānanda’s mind was seized by Māra*.

For the third time, the Blessed One said this to him:

“Ānanda, delightful is Vesālī, delightful is the Udena Shrine, delightful is the Gotamaka Shrine, delightful is the Satt’ambakā Shrine [of the Seven Women], delightful is the Bahu,puttaka Shrine [of Many Sons], delightful is the Cāpāla Shrine.

Ānanda, whoever has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of a lifespan.

Ānanda, the Tathāgata is one who has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even,<sup>551</sup> could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of a lifespan.

Ānanda, if the Tathāgata so wishes, he could remain for the life-span or for the rest of a lifespan.”

But even though the venerable Ānanda was given such a clear sign by the Blessed One, though he was given such a broad hint, he was unable **[104]** to understand it. He did not beseech the Blessed One, “Bhante, let the Blessed One stay on through the lifespan, let the Sugata [Wellfarer] stay on through the

<sup>546</sup> The 4 bases of spiritual power (*iddhi,pāda*; Skt *ṛddhi,pāda*): will or intention (*chanda*), energy or effort (*virīya*), consciousness or mind (*citta*) and mental investigation (*vīmaṃsa*) (D 3:77, D 3:213 = M1:103 = 2:11; D 3:221; Vbh 216). See **Intro (9b)3** & also Gethin 2001:94-97.

<sup>547</sup> “Cultivated and developed...made very well even,” *bhāvītā bahulī,katā yāni,katā vatthu,katā anuṭṭhitā paricīṭā susam-āraddhā* (D 2:104 5 refs, 115-118 9 refs, 3:248 f 5 refs; S 1:116, 2:264 f 4 refs, 4:200, 5:170, 259 f 4 refs; A 3:290-292 5 refs, 4:300 2 refs, 309 3 refs; U 62 f 4 refs). All the terms are defined at Pm 1:172, here paraphrased: **cultivated** (*bhāvītā*): perfected by way of embracing dhyana, insight and path; **developed** (*bahulī,katā*): thoughts (*dhammā*) do not arise in excess; **made them a vehicle** (*yāni, katā*): his calm and insight is ever ready; **made them the ground** (*vatthu,katā*): mindfulness is well-established; **attended to them** (*anuṭṭhita*): able to guide his mind; **reinforced them** (*pari,cīṭā*), lit well-accumulated: able to conquer evil mental states; **made them well even** (*susam-āraddha*), lit “making beauty arise”: overcoming defilements and attaining the goal. (Pm 3.173 f/1:172)

<sup>548</sup> “For a lifespan...or for the rest of a lifespan,” *kappam vā...kappāvasesaṃ vā* (D 2:103; S 5:259; U 62; cf Kvu 45). On the Buddha’s lifespan, see **Intro (9ab)** & on the *kappa*, see **Intro (9c)** above.

<sup>549</sup> This lifespan extension is clearly different from the earlier one [§2.23], but see Intro (9).

<sup>550</sup> *Yathā taṃ Mārena pariyaṭṭhita,citto*. Comys say that Māra is able to seize any mind that has not totally given up all mental perversions (*vipallāsa*), and Ānanda has not done so. Being a streamwinner, he is still subject to the perversion of perception (*saññā,vipallāsa*) and of mind (*citta,vipallāsa*), though not of views (*diṭṭhi,vipallāsa*). Māra seized his mind by displaying a terrifying form, and when the elder sees it he is unable to catch the hint dropped by the Buddha (DA 2:555 = SA 3:252). On the perversions, see **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** = SD 13.1 (4.1a) & **Vipallāsa S** (A 4.49/2:52; Vism 22.68) = SD 16.11.

<sup>551</sup> “Cultivated and developed...made very well even,” *bhāvītā bahulī,katā yāni,katā vatthu,katā anuṭṭhitā paricīṭā susam-āraddhā* (D 2:104 5 refs, 115-118 9 refs, 3:248 f 5 refs; S 1:116, 2:264 f 4 refs, 4:200, 5:170, 259 f 4 refs; A 3:290-292 5 refs, 4:300 2 refs, 309 3 refs; U 62 f 4 refs). All the terms are defined at Pm 1:172, here paraphrased: **cultivated** (*bhāvītā*): perfected by way of embracing dhyana, insight and path; **developed** (*bahulī,katā*): thoughts (*dhammā*) do not arise in excess; **made them a vehicle** (*yāni, katā*): his calm and insight is ever ready; **made them the ground** (*vatthu,katā*): mindfulness is well-established; **attended to them** (*anuṭṭhita*): able to guide his mind; **reinforced them** (*pari,cīṭā*), lit well-accumulated: able to conquer evil mental states; **made them well even** (*susam-āraddha*), lit “making beauty arise”: overcoming defilements and attaining the goal. (Pm 3.173 f/ 1:172)

lifespan for the benefit of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of gods and humans’—to that extent his mind was seized by Māra.

**3.6** Then Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“You may go, Ānanda! Now is the time for you to do as you think fit.”<sup>552</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One. Having risen from his seat and saluted the Blessed One, keeping his right side to him, he sat down under one of the trees nearby.

### Māra’s invitation

**3.7** Then, not long after the venerable Ānanda had left, **Māra the evil one** went up to the Blessed One and stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, Māra the evil one said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One’s parinirvana! For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One.”<sup>553</sup>

“Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **monk disciples**<sup>554</sup> who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.”<sup>555</sup>

**3.8a** But now, bhante, the monk disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished, trained, skilled, [have found safety from the yokes,]<sup>556</sup> learned, bearers of the Dharma, **[105]** trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One’s parinirvana!

**3.8b** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

<sup>552</sup> *Yassa dāni tvam kalam maññasī ti.* This is stock: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.101/1:85 = SD 8.10), **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.6/2:104 = SD 13), **Sekha S** (M 53.3/1:354 = SD 21.2=14), **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90.17/2:132 f = SD 10.8), **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145.6/3:269 = S 35.88/4:62,31 = SD 20.15), **Avassuta S** (S 35.243/4:183,15, 30), **Khemā Therī S** (S 44.1/4:379,29), **Vesālī S** (S 54.9/5:321,16, 17) & **Thapatayā S** (S 55.6/5:348,27). See Joy Manné, “On a departure formula and its translation,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 10, 1993:27-43.

<sup>553</sup> Māra is here reminding of this declaration the Buddha has made during the 5<sup>th</sup> week after the Great Awakening while he was enjoying the bliss of awakening under the Goathead’s Banyan tree: see S 4.24/1:122-124; A 5:46; J 1:78 f; DhA 3:195 f). It is interesting that this early conversation between the Buddha and Māra is not recorded elsewhere in the Nikāyas. See §3.34 below, where the Buddha relates this incident to Ānanda. On Māra’s attempts to prevent the Buddha from teaching, see **Brahma,nimantanika S** (M 49) = SD 11.7(2a).

<sup>554</sup> *Bhikkhū...sāvaka.* D:W renders this as “monks and disciples,” but it seems out of context. I take it as a tatpuruṣa (P *tappurisa* cpd: see Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, 1974:77 f), or more exactly a “split tatpuruṣa,” ie as *bhikkhu,sāvaka*, and also *bhikkhuṇī,sāvika*, *upāsakā,sāvaka* and *upāsikā,sāvika*. Following this, EM Hare’s alt tr is “till my monks (nuns, laymen, laywomen) shall be disciples...” (A:H 4:207 f ad A 4:310 f). If we accept Walshe’s tr, then “monks” (*bhikkhū*) here would refer to the “worldings,” that is, those still outside the path to awakening, while “disciples” (*sāvaka*) refers to those monks on the path, that is, one of the eight types of Saints. This categorization similarly applies to the other three pairs of “followers and disciples.” However, I think the context here refer only to the 4 types of noble saints (*ariya,sāvaka*)—ie the sainthood of the monastic and the lay—and not to the worldly Sangha or unawakened lay assembly. It is important to note here that the Buddha is clearly not referring to a statistical population, but a spiritual community of those who have gained the path.

<sup>555</sup> *Na tāvāham pāpima parinibbāyissāmi yāva me bhikkhū na sāvakā bhavissanti viyattā vinītā visāradā [patta,yoga-k,khemā]\* bahu-s,sutā dhamma,dharā dhammānudhamma,paṭipannā sāmīci,paṭipannā anudhamma,cārino, sakam ācariyakam uggahetvā ācikkhissanti desessantī paññāpessanti paṭihapessanti vivarissanti vibhajissanti uttāni,karissanti, uppannam para-p,pavādam saha dhammena suniggahitām niggahetvā sappāṭihāriyam dhammam desessantī ti.* \*This phrase is omitted here but found in A 4:311.

<sup>556</sup> *Patta,yoga-k,khemā*, found in D 3:125, A 4:311 & S 5:259 (1 MS, see S:W 5:232 n3) but omitted in D 2:104-106, S 5:261 f, U 63 f and Comy; cf A 2:8. See §3.36b & n.



‘Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **nun disciples** who are accomplished....’

But now, bhante, the nun disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished,....

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One’s parinirvana!

**3.8c** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

‘Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **layman disciples** who are accomplished....’

But now, bhante, the layman disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished,....

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One’s parinirvana!

**3.8d** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

‘Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **laywoman disciples** who are accomplished, trained, skilled, [have found safety from the yoke,] learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own [106] Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.’

But now, bhante, the laywoman disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished,....

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One’s parinirvana!

**3.8e** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

‘Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana as long as **this holy life** has not flourished, prospered, spread wide, well known to the many, spread amongst the masses, as long as it has not been well proclaimed amongst human beings.’

But now, bhante, the Blessed One’s holy life has flourished, prospered, spread wide, well known to the many, spread amongst the masses, and well proclaimed amongst human beings.<sup>557</sup>

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One’s parinirvana!”

### The Buddha relinquishes his lifespan

**3.9** Then the Blessed One said this to Māra the evil one:

“Worry not, evil one, it will not be long before the Tathāgata’s parinirvana. At the end of [With the passing of]<sup>558</sup> three months from now, the Tathāgata shall enter parinirvana.”<sup>559</sup>

<sup>557</sup> *Etarahi kho pana bhante bhagavato brahma, cariyam iddham c’eva phitam ca vittharikam bahu, jañnam puthu, bhutam yava-d-eva manussehi suppakasitan ti* = U 64, 16-19, commented at UA 332-330. This passage is also at **Cāpāla Cetiya S** (S 51.10/5:262, 9-14) & **Nagara S** (S 12.65/2:107, 2-5 = SD 14.2), where (in both cases) *etarahi kho pana bhante* is replaced by *tayidam bhikkhave*, and where SA parallels DA 2:554-558. The underscored phrase reads thus at D 16.3, S 12.65, S 51.10, & U 64; but vl & SA has *yava deva, manussehi, & Divy deva, manusyebhyaḥ*. **Bodhi:** “I follow SA in its explanation of *yava deva, manussehi suppakasitam*. The point is that, despite the use of the instrumental form *-ehi*, the Dhamma is not proclaimed *by* devas and humans, but ‘throughout the region (inhabited) by devas and humans in the ten-thousandfold galaxy, within this extent it is well proclaimed, well taught, *by the Tathāgata’ (yava dasa, sahassa, cakkavāle deva, manussehi paricchedo atthi, etasmim antare suppakasitam sudesitam tathāgatena)*. It is possible *-ehi* here is a vestigial Eastern locative plural: see Geiger, *Pāli Grammar* §80.3.” (S:B 779 n182). Be that as it may, the Dharma is truly spread only when it is “well spread,” and as such this applies to “gods and men,” too. The life of the Dharma lies in its being well proclaimed and well realized, and well proclaimed by such beings. This is clear from this passage’s context in **Mahā, parinibbāna S** here.

<sup>558</sup> “At the end of [With the passing of],” *accayena*. The word can be rendered either way: (1) at the end of three months; (2) after three months. Could the Buddha be pulling Māra’s legs here, and lived an extra 6 months to pass away the following Vesākha full moon—in which, however, it would appear that the Buddha had extended his life further than 3 months.

<sup>559</sup> *Apposukko tvam pāpima hohi, na ciram Tathāgatassa parinibbānam bhavissati, ito tiṇṇam māsānam accayena Tathāgato parinibbāyissati ti*. On the question whether the Buddha passes away on Vesak Day, see **Intro (9d)** above.

**3.10** Then the Blessed One, at the Cāpāla Shrine, mindfully and fully aware, **relinquished his life-formation.**<sup>560</sup> And when the Blessed One had relinquished his life-formation, there was a great earth-tremor, terrifying and hair-raising, and thunder-peals [the sky-drums bursting forth].<sup>561</sup>

Then the Blessed [107] One, understanding the meaning of this, uttered this verse of uplift on that occasion:

The sage lets go of the formation of existence, of life [the remaining lifespan], low and high,  
Delighting within and mentally concentrated, he broke the armour-like self-existence.<sup>562</sup>

### The 8 causes of earth-tremors

**3.11**<sup>563</sup> Then this occurred to the venerable Ānanda: “It is wonderful indeed! It is marvellous indeed! What a great earth-tremor that was, terrifying and hair-raising, and thunder-peals [the sky-drums bursting forth]. What now is the reason, what is the cause for such a great earth-tremor to occur?”

**3.12** Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, and having saluted him, sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“It is wonderful indeed! It is marvellous indeed! What a great earth-tremor that was, terrifying and hair-raising, and thunder-peals [the sky-drums bursting forth]. What now is the reason, what is the cause [condition], for such a great earth-tremor?”

<sup>560</sup> “Life-formation” (*āyu, saṅkhāra*; elsewhere *jīvita, saṅkhāra*) (M 1:295, 296; S 2:266; J 4:215). Cf §2.23 where the Buddha willfully extends his life. See S:B 819 n366. See **Intro (9b)** on the Buddha’s lifespan, **(9c)** on *kappa*, & **(9f)**: Did the Buddha commit suicide?

<sup>561</sup> A similar phenomenon (*dhamma, niyāma*) follows immediately after the Buddha passes into parinirvana [§6.10].

<sup>562</sup> *Tulam atulam ca sambhavam bhava, saṅkhāram avassajī munī | Ajjhatta, rato samāhito abhida kavacam iv’atta, sambhavam.* This difficult stanza has the same comy—SA 3:254 f = DA 2:557 f = AA 4:153 f = UA 329 f—that offer two alternative explanations: one taking *tulam* and *atulam* as contrasted opposites, the other taking *tulam* as a present participle and *atulam* and *sambhavam* as the contrasted opposited. Cf Sn 85b where *atulyo* describes a teacher of the path (*magg’akkhāyī*), probably the Buddha; Sn 683a, where it is used to qualify the Bodhisattva; Thī 201a *atuliyam* describes the *akampitam dhammam*, “the unshakable state,” presumably nirvana. Cf U 6.1; S 5:263; Divy 203. **Nettipakaraṇa** takes *tulam* as the *saṅkhāra, dhātu* (the totality of conditioned things), and *atulam* as the *nibbāna, dhātu* (Nett 61): on the 2 elements (*dhātu*) of nirvana, see It 2.2.7/38. See Bhikkhu important and detailed n, S:B 1941 n255.

<sup>563</sup> The previous episode (the relinquishment of the Buddha’s lifespan) [§§3.1-10] and this episode on earth-tremors (*bhūmi, cāla*) [3.1-20] are found in **Bhūmi, cālā S** (A 8.70/4:308-313) and in **Ekōttar’āgama 42.5** (T 125 753c 11-754a 11). In his tr, Rhys Davids makes this n: “The narrative is now interrupted by the insertion of paragraphs which at first sight seem to be quite out of place. But the connexion, or want of connexion, between them and the main story is very suggestive as to the way in which the Suttanta was put together. The whole chapter is an answer to a possible objection, either from outsiders or from weaker members of the fold, that if the Buddha were really so great why did he die at all. The suggested answer is that he could have lived on if he had so wished; but he did not wish because he had certain kinds of power and insight and self-mastery which prevented him from doing so. For the purpose of this answer these paragraphs, already in existence among the Suttas current in the community, and dealing with these powers, are here repeated without any such connecting argument as we should find under similar circumstances, in a modern (written) book of apologetics. The argument suggested by them follows exactly the same lines as that in **the Mahāli S...**” (D:RD 2:113 n3; emphasis added).

**The Madhyam’āgama** (Ma 36 = T 26 477b 21-478b 12), **the Mūlasarvāstivādin** version (22, 1-23, 8) and **the Tibetan Dulva** (f 573<sup>a</sup>-577<sup>a</sup> = Rockhill 1884:132 f) mention only 3 natural causes of an earth-tremor. It is here, according to the Dulva, that the Buddha teaches “**the three great references**” (f 573<sup>a</sup>-577<sup>a</sup>) “but it is more developed than the Pāli version, and gives many more rules” (Rockhill 1884:132 n1). The 4 great references are at §4.7 below. The 8 causes of an earth-tremor is found in all versions, and as such most likely forms an original part of the sutta, but is a borrowing from **Bhūmi, cālā S** (A 8.70). However, the set of 3 causes (due to its number) is probably much older. Whether these earth-tremors actually occurred or not, it is more important to understand their significance: they are “**a literary device** of showing that the Buddha’s abandoning of his will to live on affects the entire cosmos, not only the human world” (Ray 1994:51). In fact, “all the events of Buddha accompanying an earth-tremor have a religious meaning which is more important than mere historical or biographical part to which they are related” (Pye 1979:106). See An Yang-Gyu 2001:59-64.

**3.13** “Ānanda, there are **these eight reasons and conditions for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor**. What are the eight?

(1) Here, Ānanda, the great earth rests on water; the water on wind; the wind on space. And when the mighty wind moves, it disturbs the water, and through the disturbance of the water, the earth trembles.<sup>564</sup>

This, [108] Ānanda, is the first reason, the first condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

**3.14** (2) Furthermore, Ānanda, a recluse or brahmin of great power, accomplished in mental powers, or a devata of great power and great glory, but whose earth-consciousness is weakly developed, but his water-consciousness is immeasurable, and he makes the earth shudder and shake violently.

This, Ānanda, is the second reason, the second condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

**3.15** (3) Furthermore, Ānanda, when the Bodhisattva, having left Tusita heaven and, mindfully and fully aware, descends into the mother’s womb, this earth shudders, trembles and shakes.

This, Ānanda, is the third reason, the third condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

**3.16** (4) Furthermore, Ānanda, when the Bodhisattva, mindfully and fully aware, leaves the mother’s womb, this earth shudders, trembles and shakes.<sup>565</sup>

This, Ānanda, is the fourth reason, the fourth condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

**3.17** (5) Furthermore, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata awakens to the supreme full self-awakening, this earth shudders, trembles and shakes.<sup>566</sup>

This, Ānanda, is the fifth reason, the fifth condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

**3.18** (6) Furthermore, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata turns the peerless Wheel of Truth, this earth shudders, trembles and shakes.<sup>567</sup>

This, Ānanda, is the sixth reason, the sixth condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

**3.19** (7) Furthermore, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata, mindfully and fully aware, relinquishes the life-formation, this earth shudders, trembles and shakes.

This, Ānanda, is the seventh reason, the seventh condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

**3.20** (8) Furthermore, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata enters into parinirvana, [109] the remainderless nirvana-element, this earth shudders, trembles and shakes.<sup>568</sup>

This, Ānanda, is the eighth reason, the eighth condition, for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.

These, Ānanda, are the eight reasons and conditions for the occurrence of a great earth-tremor.<sup>569</sup>

### The eight assemblies

**3.21** <sup>570</sup>Now, Ānanda, there are these eight assemblies?

What are the eight?<sup>571</sup>

<sup>564</sup> This clearly refers to what we today call the tectonic movements of the earth, causing earth-tremors or earthquakes.

<sup>565</sup> This refers to the Nativity, that is, when the Bodhisattva is born at Lumbinī (J 1:52).

<sup>566</sup> This refers to the Great Awakening at Buddha, gayā (J 1:76). See **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26.18/1:167), SD 1.11 (2003).

<sup>567</sup> This refers to teaching of the First Discourse at the Deer Park, Isi,patana (V 1:10-12; S 56.11/5:420-424; DA 1:2; J 1:92). See **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana S**, SD 1.1 (2003).

<sup>568</sup> According to Tibetan beliefs (based on the early Buddhist teachings on the primary elements), in a dying person, the “**earth element**” dissolves first (the body loses strength), then the “water element” dissolves (loss of control of bodily fluids), then the fire element dissolves (mouth and nose dry up; body loses warmth), and then the air element dissolves (difficulty in breathing). See for example Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, 1994:251-253.

<sup>569</sup> **Milinda,pañha** (Miln 113-119) discusses the *ninth* cause of a great earth-tremor, ie, when Vessantara made his great offering and the earth shook seven times (J 1:74, 547). Nāgasena actually evades the answer by recounting Vessantara’s virtues. This question, I think, can be resolved by the fact that the 8 causes of a great earth-tremor form a canonical list while the Vessantara J is commentarial.

<sup>570</sup> Foll §§ [3.21-23] also in **Parisā S** (A 8.69/4:307 f) and nearly identical to a passage in **Maha Sīhanāda S** (M 12.29/1:72). Apparently, the passage on the “8 causes of earth-tremors” attracted 3 more “eights” [§§3.21-33], directly connected with the Teaching. These passages have been interpolated here apparently because such vital teachings reflect the urgency of the moment.

<sup>571</sup> For an evidently older listing, see **Dhammaññū S** (A 7.64.9/4:116) = SD 30.10.

- (1) The kshatriya [noble class] assembly,
- (2) the brahmin [priestly] assembly,
- (3) the houselord assembly,
- (4) the recluse assembly,
- (5) the assembly of the Four Great Kings,
- (6) the assembly of the Thirty-two Gods,
- (7) Māra's assembly, and
- (8) the assembly of Brahmās.

**3.22** Ānanda, I recall having approached a kshatriya assembly of many hundreds, assembled with them before, and conversed with them before, and engaged in discussion with them before. Whatever their colour was then,<sup>572</sup> so was my colour, too. Whatever was their voice then, so was my voice, too. I instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk.

But even as I was speaking, they knew me not, wondering, 'Who could this be who speaks? A deva or a human?'

And having instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk, I disappeared. And when I have disappeared, they wondered, 'Who is this who has disappeared? A deva or a human?'

**3.23** Ānanda, I recall having approached a brahmin assembly of many hundreds,...

...I recall having approached a houselord assembly,....

...I recall having approached a recluse assembly,....

...I recall having approached an assembly of the Four Great Kings,....

...I recall having approached an assembly of the Thirty-two Gods,....

...I recall having approached Māra's assembly,....

Ānanda, I recall having approached an assembly of Brahmās of many hundreds, assembled with them before, and conversed with them before, and engaged in discussion with them before. Whatever their colour was then, so was my colour, too. Whatever was their voice then, so was my voice, too. I instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk.

But even as I was speaking, they knew me not, wondering, 'Who could this be who speaks? A deva or a human?' [110]

And having instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk, I disappeared. And when I have disappeared, they wondered, 'Who is this who has disappeared? A deva or a human?'

These, Ānanda, are the eight assemblies.<sup>573</sup>

## The 8 bases for mastery

**3.24** Ānanda, there are these eight bases for mastery.<sup>574</sup>

What are the eight?

**3.25** (1) Perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms externally [in another], *limited*, beautiful or ugly.<sup>575</sup> By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, 'I know, I see.'

<sup>572</sup> "Then," *tattha*, lit "in that place."

<sup>573</sup> This teaching here concerns Buddhist missiology, the discipline and art of teaching and spreading the Buddha Word. From the Buddha's statement here, it is clear that he is capable of blending with the crowd and effectively communicating with his listeners at their level. Cf the 6 qualities of an ideal Dharma speaker given in **Alaṅ S** (A 4:296-299), **Udayī S** (A 3:184) and Piya Tan, *The Teaching Methods of the Buddha*, 2001 (unpublished MS): <http://pali.house.googlepages.com/TeachingMethodsoftheBuddha.pdf>. Also to be seen here are the roots of an omnipresent and protean Buddha or Mahāyāna Bodhisattva ideal.

<sup>574</sup> "Bases of mastery" or "spheres of transcendence" (*abhibh'āyatana*, Skt *abhibhv-āyatana* = *abhibhū* + *āyatana*, D 16.3.24/2:110, 33.3.1(10)/ 3:260; M 77.23/2:13 f; S 35.96/4:77; A 8.65/4:305 f, 8.90/349; Nm 143; Dhs §§235-247; DhsA 191). This teaching was given to Udāyi in **Mahā Sakul'udāyi S** (M 77.23/2:13 f). These are powers gained through *kaṣiṇa* (Skt *kṛtsna*) meditation as means of transcending the sense-sphere. In **Parihāna Dhamma S** (S 35.96), the term is applied to 6 "mastered bases" (*cha abhibh'āyatanāni*) and refer to the mastery of the senses: when a sense-object impinges on the sense-base, "there do not arise in him evil unwholesome states, nor any memories and intentions connected with the mental fetters" (S 35.96/4:76 f). See *Buddhist Dictionary: abhibhāyatana & Ency Bsm*, sv; also Shaw, *Buddhist Meditation*, 2006: 93.

<sup>575</sup> *Ajjhattam rūpa,saññī eko bahiddhā,rūpāni passati parittāni suvaṇṇa,dubbaṇṇāni.*



This is the first base for mastery.

**3.26** (2) Perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms externally [in another], *immeasurable*, beautiful or ugly. By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, ‘I know, I see.’

This is the second base for mastery.

**3.27** (3) Not perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms *externally* [in another], *limited*, beautiful or ugly. By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, ‘I know, I see.’

This is the third base for mastery.

**3.28** (4) Not perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms *externally* [in another], *immeasurable*, beautiful or ugly. By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, ‘I know, I see.’

This is the fourth base for mastery.

**3.29** (5) Not perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms externally, that are blue [indigo], of blue colour, blue in appearance, with a blue glow.<sup>576</sup>

Just as a flax flower<sup>577</sup> that is blue, of blue colour, blue in appearance, with a blue glow; or just like Benares cloth smoothed on both sides, that is blue, blue in appearance, with a blue glow; even so, not perceiving forms internally, one seeks forms externally, blue, of blue colour, blue in appearance, with a blue glow.

By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, ‘I know, I see.’

This is the fifth base for mastery. [111]

**3.30** (6) Not perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms externally, that are yellow, of yellow colour, yellow in appearance, with a yellow glow.

Just as a cassia<sup>578</sup> flower that is yellow, of yellow colour, yellow in appearance, with a yellow glow; or just like Benares cloth smoothed on both sides, that is yellow, yellow in appearance, with a yellow glow; even so, not perceiving forms internally, one seeks forms externally, yellow, of yellow colour, yellow in appearance, with a yellow glow.

By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, ‘I know, I see.’

This is the sixth base for mastery.

**3.31** (7) Not perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms externally, that are red [copper-red], of red colour, red in appearance, with a red glow.



**Karṇikāra** (Cassia, Pudding Pipe, Golden Shower, Kīnihirimal) with yellow flowers

<sup>576</sup> On blue (*nīla*) *kaṣiṇa*, and yellow (*pīta*), copper-red (*lohita*) and white (*odāta*), see *Bhāvanā* = SD 15.1(9.2).

<sup>577</sup> *Ummā, puppha*, *Linum usitatissimum*, a plant of the family Linaceae. It is a herbaceous annual, when densely planted for fibre, averages 3-4 ft (0.9-1.2 m) in height, with slender stalks, and with branches concentrated at the top. The flowers, born on stems growing from branch tips, have five petals, usu blue in colour but sometimes white or pink. The Pali *nīla* refers to colours ranging from blue, dark-blue, green, dark green, blue-green, grey, blue-black, and sometimes black; in meditation, however, it refers to the indigo or dark-blue of the linseed or flax flower (*ummā puppha*) (V 4:120; D 16.3.29/2:110; M 2:13 = A 5:61; Ap 258; Tha 1068): see PED: *ummā* & CPD: *ummā-puppha*.

<sup>578</sup> “Cassia,” *kaṇṇikāra* or *kaṇikāra* (Skt *karṇikāra*) (PED: *Pterospermum acerifolium*, but this is not the cassia tree), the tree (J 5:295, 420, 422, 6:269; Ap 167, 183; B 17.19; Mahv 73.123), or *~puppha*, its flower (D 3:111 = M 2:14 = A 5:61; J 2:25; Vism 173). The *karṇikāra*, also called cassia, pudding-pipe, golden shower tree, or *kīnihirimal* in Sinhalese, has long drooping pods and large racemes or clusters of star-shaped yellow flowers. It is often featured in ancient Indian literature, such as the *Buddha, carita*. Almost every part of the cassia tree is useful. The leafy shoots are cut and steamed as a fresh vegetable. The leaves steeped in water provide a laxative tea, or ground into a paste soothe skin irritations, and 4 grams of the sticky black seeds boiled in salted water drunk before bedtime is said to relieve “heart congestion.” Its bark when macerated becomes a good leather cleaner. This beautiful tall hardwood is also used in construction, and is so durable that it can be made into the spokes of wheels and handles for plows. Indians often plant a *karnikara* for each child born to the family as an investment for their future, but also as a kind of sympathetic magic, that the child would grow tall and strong like the tree.

Just as a hibiscus<sup>579</sup> flower that is red, of red colour, red in appearance, with a red glow; or just like Benares cloth smoothened on both sides, that is red, red in appearance, with a red glow; even so, not perceiving forms internally, one seeks forms externally, red, of red colour, red in appearance, with a red glow.

By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, ‘I know, I see.’



Hibiscus (*bandhu, jīvika*)

This is the sixth base for mastery.

**3.32** (8) Not perceiving forms internally [within oneself], one sees forms externally, that are white, of white colour, white in appearance, with a white glow.

Just as a the morning star<sup>580</sup> flower that is white, of white colour, white in appearance, with a white glow; or just like Benares cloth smoothened on both sides, that is white, white in appearance, with a white glow; even so, not perceiving forms internally, one seeks forms externally, white, of white colour, white in appearance, with a white glow.

By mastering [transcending] them, one perceives thus, ‘I know, I see.’

This is the eighth base for mastery.

These, Ānanda, are the eight bases for mastery.

## The 8 liberations

**3.33** Ānanda, there are these eight liberations.<sup>581</sup>

<sup>579</sup> *Bandhu, jīvika* (PED: *Pentapetes phœnicea*, but prob *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) (D 2:111; M 2:14; J 4:179; Vism 174; VvA 43, 161; DhsA 14). The hibiscus or red hibiscus, belongs to the Malvaceae family (a large group of dicotyledonous flowering plants), and is also called Chinese hibiscus or “shoe flower.” The Sinhalese call it bandu. It is a shrub common in tropical Asia, now widely planted, frequently as a hedge. When crushed, the red flowers turn black, yielding a dark purplish dye that is used in India for blackening shoes. In China, the dye is used for the hair and eyebrows. It is also used to color liquor and to dye paper a bluish purple tint that reacts with litmus. Hawaiians eat raw flowers to aid digestion; the Chinese pickle and eat them.

<sup>580</sup> *Osadhī, tāraaka*, lit “the medicine star” (D 2:111; M 2:14; S 1:65; J 1:23). Also tr as “the star of healing.” *Osadhīsa* is the moon (Abhp 52; Sadd 380), which Indian mythology regards as the lord of healing. DPL says this is Venus (but without evidence).

<sup>581</sup> “**The eight liberations**” (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*, Skt *aṣṭa, vimokṣā*, D 2:70 f, 111 f, 3:262, 288; A 4:306, 349). The first 3 liberations are *kaṣiṇa* meditations, expl in some detail in **Mahā Sakuludāyi S** (M 77.23/2:13), but in greater detail in **Paṭisambhidā, magga** (Pm 2:38-40). Comy on **Mahā Sakuludāyi S** (M 77.22/2:13) says that these liberations (*vimokkhā*) are the mind’s full (but temporary) release from the opposing states and its full (but temporary) release by delighting in the object (MA 3:255, cf 255-259).

Liberations 1-3 have to do with the “bases for mastery” (*abhibh’āyatanā*) [§§3.24-32]; liberations 4-7 are the dhyanas; and the last is the cessation of perception and feeling (*nirodha, samāpatti*). The 8 liberations are as follows:

(1) **The 1<sup>st</sup> liberation** is that of one with physical form sees physical forms (*rūpī rūpāni passati*). This liberation is the attainment of the 4 dhyanas using a *kaṣiṇa* (meditation device) derived from a coloured object on one’s own body. Perceiving form in one’s own body, one sees forms externally. This is said in connection with *kaṣiṇa* meditation and is one of the “bases for mastery” (*abhibhāyatana*), ie, powers gained through *kaṣiṇa* meditation as means of transcending the sense-sphere; see D 2:110; M 77/2:13; A 8.675/4:305, 10.29/6:61. MA explains that the meditator does the preliminary exercise (*parikamma*) on an internal form (in one’s own body), for example, the blue of the eyes for a blue *kaṣiṇa*, the skin for a yellow *kaṣiṇa*, the blood for a red *kaṣiṇa*, the teeth for a white *kaṣiṇa*, but the concentration sign (*nimitta*) arises externally (MA 3:258 f). The “transcending” (*abhibhāyatana*) of the forms is the attainment of absorption together with the arising of the sign. On emerging from the absorption, he considers, “I know, I see.”

(2) **The 2<sup>nd</sup> liberation** is that of one who does not see physical form internally, but sees physical forms externally (*ajjhataṃ arūpa, saññī bahiddhā rūpāni passati*). This second liberation is the attainment of dhyana using a *kaṣiṇa* derived from an external object and the arising of the concentration sign externally. The formulation of the second *vimokkha* “suggests that it is a shorthand for all the eight *abhibhāyatanas* which consist of variations on the theme *ajjhataṃ arūpa-saññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati*” (Gethin 2002:267 n7).

What are the eight?

(1) One with physical form sees physical forms.<sup>582</sup>

This is the first liberation. [112]

(2) One does not see physical forms internally, but sees physical forms externally.<sup>583</sup>

This is the second liberation.

(3) One is liberated after contemplating the idea of the beautiful.<sup>584</sup>

This is the third liberation.

(4) Through the utter transcending of the perception of physical forms, the passing away of the perception of impingement [sense-contact], and non-attention to the perception of diversity, [contemplating,] ‘Space is infinite,’ one enters and dwells in the base of the infinity of space.

This is the fourth liberation.

(5) Through the utter transcending of the infinity of space, [contemplating,] ‘Consciousness is infinite,’ one enters and dwells in the base of the infinity of consciousness.

This is the fifth liberation.

(6) Through the utter transcending of the base of the infinity of consciousness, [contemplating,] ‘There is nothing,’ one enters and dwells in the base of nothingness.

This is the sixth liberation.

(7) Through the utter transcending of the base of nothingness, one enters and dwells in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

This is the seventh liberation.

(8) Through the utter transcending of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, one enters and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling.<sup>585</sup>

(3) **The 3<sup>rd</sup> liberation** is that of one liberated after contemplating the idea of the beautiful (‘*subhan’ t’eva adhimutto hoti*). *Subha* (“beautiful”) here refers to the perception of either a very pure and beautiful coloured *kaṣiṇa* or the 4 *brahma, vihāra*. This is said in reference to the attainment of form absorption (*rūpa jhāna*) by means of concentrating the mind on very pure, bright and beautiful colours as the *kaṣiṇa*-object. **Paṭisambhidā, magga** says that this mental state is also produced through the cultivation of the divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), as a result of which all beings appear perfectly pure and glorious, and thus the mind turns to the beautiful (Pm 5.20/2:39).

These first three are said in connection with *kaṣiṇa* meditation by way of the “bases of mastery” or “bases for transcendence” (*abhibhāyatana*), ie, one of the 8 stages of mastery over the senses through absorption. See Mahā Parinibbāna S (D 16.3.24/2:110), **Mahā Sakuludāyī S** (M 77.22/2:13); **Abhibhāyatana S** (A 8.65/4:305), **Kosala S** (A 10.29/5:61). **Dhamma, saṅgaṇī** apparently regards the *abhibhāyatana* as being “concerned with the mastery and facility in certain aspects of *jhāna* practice” (Gethin, 2001:267). See Dhs 45-52 where the 8 *abhibhāyatana* (with slight variations from the Nikāya formulation) are treated as an aspect of *jhāna* that is of the form realm (*rūpāvaca-ra*); cf DhsA 187-190.

The next four (4-7) are the formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*):

(4) The sphere of the infinity of space.

(5) The sphere of the infinity of consciousness.

(6) The sphere of nothingness.

(7) The sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

(8) The cessation of perception and feeling. This last stage requires both concentration and insight, and can be attained only by non-returners and arhats who have mastered the formless attainments. See Bodhi, *The Great Discourse on Causation* [Mahā, nidāna Sutta tr & exegeses]. Kandy: BPS, 1984:47-51.

See discussion in **Maha Nidāna S** (D 15.35/2:70 f) = SD 5.17 Intro (10). See also Analayo 2009: 141-148.

<sup>582</sup> *Rūpī rūpāni passati*. This first liberation refers to the attainment of the 4 dhyanas using a *kaṣiṇa* (meditation device) derived from a coloured object on one’s own body. See §3.33 n on “the eight liberations.”

<sup>583</sup> *Ajjhattam arūpa, saññī bahiddhā rūpāni passati*. This second liberation is the attainment of dhyana using a *kaṣiṇa* derived from an external object and the arising of the concentration sign externally. See §3.33 n on “the eight liberations.”

<sup>584</sup> ‘*Subhan’ t’eva adhimutto hoti*. This third liberation refers to the attainment of the perception of either a very pure, bright and beautiful (*subha*) coloured *kaṣiṇa* or of the 4 *brahma, vihāra*. See §3.33 n on “the eight liberations” & Analayo 2009: 146 f.

<sup>585</sup> “The cessation of perception and feeling,” *saññā, vedayita nirodha*. This anomalous state, fully described in **Visuddhi, magga** (Vism 23.16-52/702-709), is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight where all mental

This is the eighth liberation.  
These, Ānanda, are the eight liberations.

### Ānanda is told of Māra's visits

**3.34** <sup>586c</sup> Ānanda, once, when I had just attained the supreme self-awakening, I stayed under the Goat-herd's Banyan Tree on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at Uruvelā. Then Māra the Evil One came to me, stood at one side and said:

‘May the Blessed One now attain parinirvana, may the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana. Now is the time for the Blessed One's parinirvana.’

**3.35** Then I said to Māra:

‘Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **monk disciples**<sup>587</sup> who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, [113] establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.

Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **nun disciples** who are accomplished trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.

Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **layman disciples** who are accomplished trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.

Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **laywoman disciples** who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.’

**3.36a** And today itself, Ānanda, just now, Māra the evil one approached me at the Cāpāla Shrine. Having approached me, Māra the evil one stood one said. Standing thus at one side, Māra the evil one said this:

**3.36b** ‘Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One's parinirvana! For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

“Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until [114] I have **monk disciples** who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.”

But now, bhante, the monk disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished, trained, skilled, [have found safety from the yokes,]<sup>588</sup> learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma,

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states temporarily shut down (Vism 23.43/707 f): see **Sappurisa S** (M 113) = SD 23.7 Intro (2); **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43) = SD 30.2 Intro (3).

<sup>586</sup> After the interpolation of the doctrines of 8's, the narrative resumes here from §3.10. The following sections [§§3.34-42]—the Buddha tells Ānanda about Māra's visits in the past and present; the parinirvana in 3 months' time; Ānanda's belated invitation and rebuke by the Buddha—are all unique to this Sutta.

<sup>587</sup> *Bhikkhū...sāvaka*. On the analyses of this word and the other 3 key words here, see above §3.7a n.

<sup>588</sup> *Patta,yoga-k,khemā*, found in D 3:125, A 4:311 & S 5:259 (1 MS, see S:W 5:232 n3) but omitted in D 2:104-106, S 5:261 f, U 63 f and Comy; cf A 2:8. *Yogā* = *oghā* (floods) = *āsavā* (mental influxes). The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been



correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One's parinirvana!

**3.36c** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

“Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **nun disciples** who are accomplished, *trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.*”

But now, bhante, the nun disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One's parinirvana!

**3.36d** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

“Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **layman disciples** who are accomplished, *trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.*”

But now, bhante, the layman disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One's parinirvana!

**3.36e** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

“Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana until I have **laywoman disciples** who are accomplished, *trained, skilled, [have found safety from the yoke,] learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.*”

But now, bhante, the laywoman disciples of the Blessed One are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dharma, trained in accordance with the Dharma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dharma, who will pass on what they have gained from their own Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear; until they shall be able, by means of the Dharma, to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dharma in all its wonder.”

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variously translated as influxes, taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists four *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav'āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh'āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāśava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) [§43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhatship. See BDict under *āsava*..

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One's parinirvana!

**3.36f** For, bhante, these are the words spoken by the Blessed One:

“Evil One, I shall not enter parinirvana as long as **this holy life** has not flourished, prospered, widespread, well known to the masses, widely spread, as long as it has not been well proclaimed amongst human beings.”

But now, bhante, the Blessed One's holy life has flourished, prospered, widespread, well known to the masses, widely spread, as long as it has been well proclaimed amongst human beings.

Bhante, may the Blessed One now attain parinirvana! May the Sugata [Well-farer] now attain parinirvana! Now is the time for the Blessed One's parinirvana!

**3.37** Ānanda, when this was spoken, I said thus to Māra the evil one:

“Worry not, evil one, it will not be long before the Tathāgata's parinirvana. At the end of [or with the passing of]<sup>589</sup> three months from now, the Tathāgata shall enter parinirvana.”

Then, Ānanda, the Blessed One, right here at the Cāpāla Shrine, mindfully and fully aware, relinquished his life-formation.” [115]

### Ānanda beseeches the Buddha

**3.38** When this was spoken the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan! May the Sugata [Wellfarer] live out for the lifespan, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!”

“Enough, Ānanda, do not beseech the Tathāgata. This is not the time for beseeching the Tathāgata.”

**3.39** For the second time, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One, *beseeching the Blessed One*....

For the third time, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan! May the Sugata [Wellfarer] live out for the lifespan, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!”

“Ānanda, do you have faith in the Blessed One's awakening?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Then, Ānanda, why do you press [trouble] the Tathāgata up to three times?”

**3.40** “But, bhante, I have heard from the mouth of Blessed One himself, I have understood from the mouth of the Blessed One himself, that whoever has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power,<sup>590</sup> made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.”

“Ānanda, do you have faith in the Blessed One's awakening?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Then, Ānanda, yours is the wrongdoing; yours is the fault, that when you were given a broad hint, when you were given a clear sign, you did not beseech the Blessed One:<sup>591</sup>

‘Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan! May the Sugata [Wellfarer] live out for the lifespan, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!’

<sup>589</sup> “At the end of [or with the passing of],” *accayena*. See above §3.9n.

<sup>590</sup> See §3.3n.

<sup>591</sup> One might ask here: why does the Buddha need to throw a broad hint to Ānanda regarding the Buddha's ability to extend his lifespan? Why not the Buddha himself simply live out his full life-span for the benefit of all beings? There are two possible answers. The first is that the Buddha does not really need to live out his full life-span as the fourfold community has been established: his work is done. The “broad hint” is a bonus that Ānanda fails to accept. But the second reason is more likely: this curious episode was interpolated some time before the Canon was closed and does not form a vital part of the sutta. Whether the Buddha lives on or not, he would eventually have to pass into parinirvana.

If, Ānanda, you had asked the Blessed One, he might have refused you twice, but the third time, he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, yours is the wrongdoing; yours is the fault.

### Ānanda's "failures" at Rājagaha

**3.41** Once, Ānanda, I was dwelling on Mount Vulture Peak near Rājagaha. There too, Ānanda, I addressed you,<sup>592</sup> [116]

‘Delightful is Rājagaha, Ānanda, delightful is Mount Vulture Peak.<sup>593</sup>

Ānanda, whoever has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, the Tathāgata is one who has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, if the Tathāgata so wishes, he could remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.’

Then, Ānanda, even when you were given a broad hint, when you were given a clear sign, you did not beseech the Blessed One (then):

‘Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan! May the Sugata [Wellfarer] live out for the life-span, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!’

If, Ānanda, you had asked the Blessed One, he might have twice refused you, but the third time, he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, yours is the wrongdoing; yours is the fault.

**3.42** Once, Ānanda, I was dwelling in the (Gotama) Banyan Park near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling at Cora Papāta [Robbers' Cliff] near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling in Satta,pannī Guha [the Cave of the Seven Leaves] at Vebhāra Passa [Vebhāra Rock] near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling at Kāla Sila [the Black Rock] on the Isigili slope near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling in the hill cave at Sappa,sonḍika [the Snake Pool] in Sīta,vana [the Cool Forest] near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling at the Tapodā Park near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling at the Kalandaka Nivāpa [the Squirrels' Feeding Ground] in Veḷu,vana [the Bamboo Park] near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling at Jīvaka Amba,vana [Jīvaka's mango grove] near that very same Rājagaha....

...I was dwelling at the Deer Park in Madda,kucchi [Belly Crunch]<sup>594</sup> near that very same Rājagaha....

**3.43**<sup>595</sup> Now there, too, Ānanda, I addressed you,

‘Delightful, Ānanda, is Rājagaha...

Delightful is Mount Vulture Peak...

Delightful is the Gotama Banyan (Park)...

Delightful is Robbers' Cliff...

Delightful is the Cave of the Seven Leaves on Vebhāra Rock...

Delightful is the Black Rock on the slope of Isigili...

Delightful is the Snake Pool in Cool Forest... [117]

Delightful is Tapodā Park...

Delightful is the Squirrels' Feeding Ground in the Bamboo Park...

<sup>592</sup> This is the first of 16 such occasions [§§3.41-47]! The rest follow hereon. See **Intro (9b)** above.

<sup>593</sup> Cf §3.2 on the delightful Cāpāla Shrine and others.

<sup>594</sup> At the foot of Mount Vulture Peak (V 2;193 f; DhA 2:164 ff; J 4:430; Miln 179). It was here, Comys say, the queen of Bimbisāra, and mother of Ajātasattu, tried to abort the latter on learning that he would in due course kill his own father. She went to the park and violently massaged (*madda*, “crushed”) her belly (*kucchi*) hoping of bringing about a miscarriage but failed (SA 1:77; cf J 3:121 f).

<sup>595</sup> This [§3.43] is qu at Kvu 559.

Delightful is Jīvaka's mango grove...

Delightful is the Deer Park in Madda,kucchi....

**3.44** <sup>596</sup>Ānanda, whoever has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, the Tathāgata is one who has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, if the Tathāgata so wishes, he could remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.'

Then, Ānanda, even when you were given a broad hint, when you were given a clear sign, you did not beseech the Blessed One (then):

'Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan! May the Sugata [Wellfarer] live out for the lifespan, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!'

If, Ānanda, you had asked the Blessed One, he might have twice refused you, but the third time, he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, yours is the wrongdoing; yours is the fault.

### Ānanda's "failures" at Vesālī

**3.45** Once, Ānanda, I was dwelling right here in the Udena Shrine near Vesālī.

Now there, too, Ānanda, I addressed you,

'Delightful, Ānanda, is Vesālī. Delightful is the Udena Shrine.

Ānanda, whoever has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, the Tathāgata is one who has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, if the Tathāgata so wishes, he could remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.'

Then, Ānanda, even when you were given a broad hint, when you were given a clear sign, you did not beseech the Blessed One (then):

'Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan! May the Sugata [Wellfarer] live out for the lifespan, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!'

If, Ānanda, you had asked the Blessed One, he might have twice refused you, but the third time, he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, yours is the wrongdoing; yours is the fault. **[118]**

**3.46** Once, Ānanda, I was dwelling right here at the Gotamaka Cetiya near Vesālī...

...I was dwelling right here at the Satt'ambā Cetiya [the Shrine of the Seven Women] near Vesālī...

...I was dwelling right here at the Bahu,puttā Cetiya [the Shrine of Many Children] near Vesālī...

...I was dwelling right here at the Sāradanda Cetiya near Vesālī...

**3.47** And today, Ānanda, right here at the Cāpāla Shrine, I addressed you,

'Delightful, Ānanda, is Vesālī...

Delightful is the Cāpāla Shrine...

Delightful is the Gotamaka Shrine...

Delightful is the Shrine of the Seven Women...

Delightful is the Shrine of Many Children...

Delightful is the Sāradanda Shrine...

Delightful is the Cāpāla Shrine...

<sup>596</sup> The following sections [§§3.44-51]—the rebuke of Ānanda (continued); the Hall of the Gabled House; the parinirvana in 3 months' time announced—are all unique to this Sutta.



Ānanda, whoever has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, the Tathāgata is one who has cultivated and developed the four bases of spiritual power, made them a vehicle, made them the ground, attended to them, reinforced them, and made them well even, could, if he so wishes, remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.

Ānanda, if the Tathāgata so wishes, he could remain for the life-span or for the rest of the lifespan.’

Then, Ānanda, even when you were given a broad hint, when you were given a clear sign, you did not beseech the Blessed One (then):

‘Bhante, may the Blessed One live out the lifespan! May the Sugata [Wellfarer] live out for the life-span, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!’

If, Ānanda, you had asked the Blessed One, he might have twice refused you, but the third time, he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, yours is the wrongdoing; yours is the fault.

**3.48** Ānanda, have I not told you before: **All those things that are dear and pleasant to us must suffer difference, separation and change [becoming other]?<sup>597</sup> What else do you expect? Whatever is born, become, formed [compounded], is liable to decay—that it should not decay is impossible.<sup>598</sup>**

Ānanda, it has been given up, rejected, thrown away, abandoned, forsaken by the Tathāgata, that is, the life-formation has been relinquished. This is spoken by the Tathāgata with absolute certainty:

‘In no long time, the Tathāgata will attain [119] parinirvana. The Tathāgata will attain parinirvana in three months’ time.’

That the Tathāgata should go back on his word for the sake of life [living on]—that is impossible.

Come now, Ānanda, let us go to Kūṭ’āgāra Sālā [the Hall of the Gabled House] in Mahāvana [the Great Wood].”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

## MAHĀ,VANA

### That the teachings may endure

**3.49**<sup>599</sup> Then the Blessed One, along with the venerable Ānanda, went **to the Hall of the Gabled House**<sup>600</sup> in Mahāvana [the Great Wood]. Having reached there, he addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, go to all the monks living in dependence on Rājagaha. Have them all gather in the assembly hall.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One and then he had all the monks living in dependence of Rājagaha to gather in the assembly hall. Then he approached the Blessed One, and having saluted him, stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, the order of monks is assembled. Bhante, now is the time for the Blessed One to do as he thinks fit.”

**3.50a** Then the Blessed One, along with the venerable Ānanda, went to the Hall of the Gabled House in the Great Wood. Having reached there, he sat down on the prepared seat. Thus seated down, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

### The 7 sets of teachings

<sup>597</sup> This famous sentence is stock: D 2:118=114=158=163; **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 2:192=194); **Cunda S** (S 5:163); Nm 1:123 qu D 16.5.14/2:144. Cf **Abhiṅga, paccavekhittaba S** (A 3:74).

<sup>598</sup> *Na nu evaṃ Ānanda mayā paṭigacc’eva akkhātāṃ, sabbeḥ’eva piyehi manāpehi nānā, bhāvo vinā, bhāvo aññathā, bhāvo? Taṃ kut’ ettha Ānanda labbhā? Yaṃ taṃ jātaṃ bhūtaṃ saṅkhātāṃ paloka, dhammaṃ taṃ vata mā palujjī ti n’etaṃ ṭhānaṃ vijjati.* This quote is stock: D 16.3.48/2:118=16.5.14/144=16.6.11a/158=16.6.20/163. The sentence, *Taṃ kut’ ettha Ānanda labbhā?* lit tr “What can you get here, Ānanda?” As at §§5.6, 6.11 below.

<sup>599</sup> The events of this section [§3.49] are expanded in **Kalīngara S** (S 20.8/2:267 f).

<sup>600</sup> “The Hall of the Gabled House,” *kūṭ’āgāra, sālā*. See DPPN: kūṭāgārasālā. See below §3.51n on the Invitation.

**3.50b** “For this reason, bhikshus, whatever teachings that have been shown to you by me through direct knowledge, you should learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them, so that the holy life will last long, so that it will stand long, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!

What are the teachings that have been shown to you by me through direct knowledge, you should learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them, [120] so that the holy life will last long, so that it will stand long, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans?

They [the teachings] are as follows:<sup>601</sup>

the four focusses of mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*).<sup>602</sup>

the four right efforts (*samma-p, padhānā*).<sup>603</sup>

the four paths to spiritual power (*iddhi, pādā*).<sup>604</sup>

the five spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriyāni*).<sup>605</sup>

the five spiritual powers (*pañca, balāni*).<sup>606</sup>

the seven limbs of awakening (*satta bojjhaṅgā*).<sup>607</sup>

the noble eightfold path (*ariyo aṭṭh'aṅgiko maggo*).<sup>608</sup>

These, bhikshus, are the teachings that have been shown to you by me through direct knowledge, you should learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them, so that the holy life will last long, so that it will stand long, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans.”<sup>609</sup>

**3.51** Then the Blessed One addressed the monks:<sup>610</sup>

“Come now, bhikshus, this I say to you:

**Formations [creations] by nature pass away! Strive on heedfully!**<sup>611</sup>

In no long time, the Tathāgata will attain parinirvana. The Tathagata will attain parinirvana in three months' time.<sup>612</sup>

<sup>601</sup> On this *māṭikā* (matrix) of the seven sets, see **Intro (10bc)** above.

<sup>602</sup> See D 1:56, 339, 2:83, 290-315, 3:101; S 3:96, 153; A 2:218, 3:12.

<sup>603</sup> See V 1:22; D 2:120; M 3:296, 2:96; A 2:74, 15 f.

<sup>604</sup> See D 2:213, 221; M 1:103 = 2:11; A 1:39, 297, 2:256, 3:82; Vbh 213.

<sup>605</sup> See M 1:295; S 3:46, 225, 4:168; A 2:151. See foll n.

<sup>606</sup> See D 2:120, 239; M 2:12, 3:296; S 3:96, 153, 4:366; A 3:10, 12; Vbh 342.

<sup>607</sup> See D 2:79, 83, 120, 302, 3:101, 128, 251, 282; M 1:11, 2:12; S 1:54, 5:83; A 1:14, 4:23; Vbh 277.

<sup>608</sup> See D 1:256 f, 165, 312; M 1:61, 118, 3:251; It 18; Sn 1130; Vbh 235.

<sup>609</sup> On the central importance of these 7 sets, see Intro (10c) above.

<sup>610</sup> **The future of the Licchavīs.** The Buddha then makes a prophecy, not recorded in Mahā Parinibbāna S, but in **Kalīngara S** (S 20.8), where he declares the strengths and weaknesses of the Licchavīs, hinting at their eventual conquest by Ajātasattu, and warns the monks of their own future:

Monks, now the Licchavīs dwell using blocks of wood as pillows. They are diligent and ardent in exercise (*upāsana*). King Ajātasattu Videhi,putta of Magadha, cannot find their weakness nor have a hold on them. But in the future, the Licchavīs will become delicate, with soft and tender hand and feet; they will sleep on soft beds with pillows of cotton until sunrise. Then Ajātasattu will find their weakness and have a hold on them.

Monks, now the monks dwell using blocks of wood as pillows. They are diligent and ardent in striving. Māra the Evil One cannot find their weakness nor have a hold on them. But in the future, the monks will become delicate, with soft and tender hand and feet; they will sleep on soft beds with pillows of cotton until sunrise. Then Māra will find their weakness and have a hold on them.

Therefore, monks, you should train yourselves thus: “Using blocks of wood as cushions, we will dwell diligent and ardent in striving.” Thus you should train yourselves. (S 20.8/2:267 f)

Comy explains that in the first period of the Buddha's Ministry, the monks would practise **meditation** from the time they finished their meal (before noon) through the first watch of the night. They would sleep in the middle watch (10.00 pm to 2.00 am), resting the head on a piece of wood. Then they would rise early and resume their walking meditation. (SA 2:230)

<sup>611</sup> *Vaya, dhammā saṅkhārā, appamādena sampādettha.*

<sup>612</sup> **Invitation Day** (*pavāraṇā/pravāraṇā*). It is curious that Mahā Parinibbāna S, with all its detailed treatments, fails to mention an important annual ceremony of the Sangha, that is, the Invitation, held on the last day of the rains

Ripe am I in years. Little of my life remains.<sup>613</sup>  
Now I go, leaving you, having made myself my refuge.

Be not heedless, bhikshus, be mindful, be virtuous,  
Guard well your mind with well-focussed thought. [121]

He who is not heedless, keeping to the Dharma and Vinaya,  
Leaving birth and samsara behind, will make an end of suffering.

## Chapter 4

(Fourth Recital, *catuttha bhāṇavāra*: the Āḷāra cycle)

### AṄGA

#### The elephant look<sup>614</sup>

[122] 4.1 Then the Blessed One, having dressed himself in the morning and taking robe and bowl, entered Vesālī for alms. Having gone into Vesālī for alms, he walked to collect almsfood and then finished his meal.<sup>615</sup> While returning from his almsround, he turned around and, looking at Vesālī with the elephant gaze,<sup>616</sup> addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, this is the last time the Tathāgata will be looking at Vesālī. Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Bhaṇḍa,gāma.**”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One together with a large order of monks arrived in Bhaṇḍa,gāma. The Blessed One stayed there in Bhaṇḍa,gāma.

4.2 Then the Blessed One addressed the monks.<sup>617</sup>

“Bhikshus, it is through not understanding, not penetrating four teachings, that you and I have long been running and wandering on this long journey in this manner.

What are the four?

(1) It is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble moral virtue [the moral virtue of the noble ones], that you and I have long been running and wandering on this long journey in this manner.

(2) It is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble concentration [the mental concentration of the noble ones], that you and I have long been running and wandering on this long journey in this manner.

retreat. It is highly unlikely that the gathering in the Hall of the Gabled House in the Great Wood was the Invitation assembly [§§3.50 f] because it was “three months” *before* the parinirvana [§3.51] (which would be in Vesākha/-Vaiśākha or May-June of the same year) [cf §5.7]. That would put the Great Wood assembly in **Māgha** (Feb-Mar).

In modern times, Māgha is highlighted by **Sangha Day**, commemorating the spontaneous assembly of 1250 arhats in the Buddha’s presence. The first 1000 monks were enlightened upon listening to the Buddha, and the remaining 250 were Sāriputta (Śāriputra) and Moggallāna (Maudgalyāyana) and their following (from Sañjaya’s ashram). To mark the occasion the Buddha delivered the Ovāda Pāṭimokkha (Avavāda Prātimokṣa), “The Admonition Code” (the first proclamation of a monastic conduct, comprising Dh 183-185) (VA 186 f; Kkhv 9 f; MA 2:209; UA 298), and delivered during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Ministry in the Bamboo Grove soon after Sāriputta’s gaining of arhathood and Dīgha,nakha’s attaining of the Dharma Eye (M 1:501). See Piyasilo, *Buddhist Law*, 1988b:40 f.

<sup>613</sup> *Parittam mama jīvitam*, lit “my life is little.”

<sup>614</sup> This whole episode is not found in the Tibetan Dulva, which only says that the Buddha “[p]roceeding then from Bhoga-nagara, and journeying in the Mallas country (Malya in the text), he came to ‘the village of the Earth,’ and stopped in the Jalūkā mahāvāna (*Dza-lu-kai ts’al-mang-pa*) (f 579<sup>a</sup>),” where Cunda the smith visits him (Rock-hill 1884:132 f).

<sup>615</sup> That is, the Buddha had his meal (eating from his almsbowl) in Vesālī itself.

<sup>616</sup> “Looking at Vesālī with the elephant gaze,” *nāgāpalokitam Vesālīm apaloketvā*. The Buddha turns his whole body around—the “elephant gaze” (*nāgāpalokita*)—to look at Vesālī as a final farewell gesture. The verb *apaloketi* is sometimes wr as *ava-loketi* through *o-loketi* (see §2.17 & n on *avaloketha*).

<sup>617</sup> As at A 4.1/2:1 f, 7.62/4:105 (qu at Kvu 1.5.15/114 in a different context).

(3) It is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble wisdom [the wisdom of the noble ones], that you and I have long been running and wandering on this long journey in this manner.

(4) It is through not understanding, not penetrating the noble liberation [the liberation of the noble ones], that you and I have long been running and wandering on this long journey in this manner.

Bhikshus, it is through penetrating, through understanding this noble moral virtue, [123] through penetrating, through understanding this noble concentration, through penetrating, through understanding this noble wisdom, through penetrating, through understanding this noble liberation, that craving for existence is uprooted, the rope of existence is broken, that there is no more rebirth here.”

4.3 The Blessed One said this. Having said this, the Sugata [Wellfarer], the teacher, further said this:

Moral virtue, concentration, wisdom and peerless liberation—

These truths have been understood by the famed Gotama.<sup>618</sup>

Through direct knowledge of the Dharma thus, the Buddha showed the monks,

The Teacher, the one with eyes, the end-maker of death, is utterly cooled.<sup>619</sup>

### The three trainings

4.4 Then the Blessed One, while staying at Bhaṇḍa.gāma, gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from the mental influxes, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”

### Sojourns

4.5 Then the Blessed One, having stayed at Bhaṇḍa.gāma for as long as he saw fit, addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Hatthi,gāma.**”

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Amba,gāma.**”

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Jambu,gāma.**”<sup>620</sup>

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **Bhoga,nagara.**”

4.6 “Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One, together with a large order of monks, arrived at Bhoga,nagara.<sup>621</sup>

### The 4 great references

4.7 <sup>622</sup>At Bhoga,nagara, the Blessed One stayed at **the Ānanda Cetiya** [Ānanda Shrine]. There the Blessed One addressed the monks, thus:

“Bhikshus, I will teach you these **four great references.**<sup>623</sup> Listen to it, pay close attention, I will speak: [124] “Yes, bhante,” the monks replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

4.9 (1) “Here, bhikshus, a monk might say this: ‘Avusos, I heard and received this teaching from the Blessed One’s own mouth: “This is the Dharma, this is the Discipline, this is the Teacher’s Teaching.”’<sup>624</sup>

<sup>618</sup> “By the famed Gotama,” *Gotamena yasassinā*. The whole stanza containing this phrase occurs at A 2:2, 4:105 & Kv 116. The phrase occurs in Sarabhaṅga’s Theragāthā (Tha 488). This stanza, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, is clearly added by the Reciters or later elders.

<sup>619</sup> “Utterly cooled,” *parinibbuto*. On the meaning and usage of this word, see **Intro (15)** above.

<sup>620</sup> Jambu,gāma (Skt Jambu,grāma), a village near Campā, the Aṅga capital. There is another Jambu,grāma on the high road between Vaiśālī and Kuśinagarī.

<sup>621</sup> Bhoga,nagara, the city of the Bhogas, a constituent tribe of the Vajjī confederacy, lying midway between Vesālī and Pāvā.

<sup>622</sup> Foll §§ [4.7-22] appear as at **Mahāpadesa S** (A 4.180/2:167-170).

<sup>623</sup> The four great references (*mahāpadesa*) serve as the criteria for the true teaching. See **Intro (11)**.



Then, bhikshus, you should neither approve nor disapprove of his word. Neither approving nor disapproving, his word and expression should be carefully studied and checked against the Sutta [Teaching] and examined (for conformity) against the Vinaya [Discipline].

If they, on such checking and examining, are found to conform neither to the Sutta nor to the Vinaya, then it should be concluded: ‘Surely, this is not the Blessed One’s Word. It has been wrongly understood by this monk,’ and the matter is to be rejected.

But where, on such checking and examining, they are found to conform to the Sutta and the Vinaya, it should be concluded, “Surely, this is the Blessed One’s Word. It has been rightly understood by this monk.

Bhikshus, remember this as the first great reference.

**4.9** (2) Here, bhikshus, a monk might say this: ‘Avusos, in such and such a place, there is a community [sangha] with elders, with distinguished teachers.<sup>625</sup> I heard and received this teaching directly from [from the mouth of] that community: “This is the Dharma, this is the Discipline, this is the Teacher’s Teaching.”’

Then, bhikshus, you should neither approve nor disapprove of his word. Neither approving nor disapproving, his word and expression should be carefully studied and checked against the Sutta [Teaching] and should be examined (for conformity) with the Vinaya [Discipline].

If they, on such checking and examining, are found to conform neither to the Sutta nor to the Vinaya, then it should be concluded: ‘Surely, this is not the Blessed One’s Word. It has been wrongly understood by this monk,’ and the matter is to be rejected.

But where, on such checking and examining, they are found to conform to the Sutta and the Vinaya, it should be concluded, [125] ‘Surely, this is the Blessed One’s Word. It has been rightly understood by this community.’

Bhikshus, remember this as the second great reference.

**4.10** (3) Here, bhikshus, a monk might say this: ‘In such and such a place, there are many elder monks who are well learned, masters of scripture, Dharma-experts, Vinaya-experts, experts in the Summary Lists [Matrices].<sup>626</sup> “This is the Dharma, this is the Discipline, this is the Teacher’s Teaching.”’

Then, bhikshus, you should neither approve nor disapprove of his word. Neither approving nor disapproving, his word and expression should be carefully studied and checked against the Sutta [Teaching] and examined (for conformity) against to the Vinaya [Discipline].

If they, on such checking and examining, are found to conform neither to the Sutta nor to the Vinaya, then it should be concluded: ‘Surely, this is not the Blessed One’s Word. It has been wrongly understood by this monk,’ and the matter is to be rejected.

<sup>624</sup> This statement is clearly in reference to **Purāṇa**, who visits Rājagaha after First Council but when asked to accept its resolutions gives this reply (Cuv 11.1.11 = V 2:288 f): see §3.11n. It is possible that the 4 great references were formulated on account of Purāṇa here and inserted into the sutta. The **Mahā Kamma, vibhaṅga S** (M 136) relates how the wanderer Potali,putta falsely claims to have heard teaching directly from the Buddha himself, and presents wrong views which the novice monk (*navaka, bhikkhu*) Samiddhi is unable to put right (M 136.2/3:207). See S Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, 1984:18 f.

<sup>625</sup> *Saṅgho ...sa-t,thero sa,pāmokkho.*

<sup>626</sup> *Sambahulā therā bhikkhū...bahussutā āgat’āgamā dhamma,dharā vinaya,dharā mātikā,dharā. Māṭikā* started off as a Vinaya term, where it refers to the Pāṭimokkha, eg in the stock phrase: *dhamma,dhara, vinaya,dhara, māṭikā,dhara* (see Hinüber 1994). The Sutta materials are not arranged in a very systematic order, in spite of some early attempts (such as the last 2 suttas of D, ie D 33-34), esp **Das’uttara S** (D 34), containing lists on different concepts of the Dharma. The Comys call this text a *māṭikā* (DA 1054,29). The above usage [§4.10] of *māṭikā* prob refers to either such Vinay texts or such Sutta texts, or both. In post-Buddha times, the term *maṭikā* refers to lists or summaries of Abhidhamma teachings, serving as lemmata (headwords) which are then explained in the text: see Mohv:W xix-xxvii. These *māṭikās* arose once the early Buddhists “tried to go beyond the simple collection of discourses of the Buddha and began to arrange the main points of his teaching in a systematic form which at the same time could be easily memorized [see Frauwallner 1964:59 f]. | The lists thus created needed, just as the late Vedic Sūtra texts are hardly understandable without a commentary. Thus the *māṭikās* may be the Buddhist answer to the Vedic Sūtras [Frauwallner 1971b:104].” (Hinüber 1996:65).

But where, on such checking and examining, they are found to conform to the Sutta and the Vinaya, it should be concluded, ‘Surely, this is the Blessed One’s Word. It has been rightly understood by these elders.’

Bhikshus, remember this as the third great reference.

**4.11** (4) Here, bhikshus, a monk might say this: ‘In such and such a place, there is an elder monk who is well learned, master of scripture, Dharma-expert, Vinaya-expert, expert in the Summaries [Matri-ces]:<sup>627</sup> “This is the Dharma, this is the Discipline, this is the Teacher’s Teaching.”

Then, bhikshus, you should neither approve nor disapprove of his word. Neither approving nor disapproving, his word and expression should be carefully studied and checked against the Sutta [Teaching] and examined (for conformity) with the Vinaya [Discipline].

If they, on such checking and examining, are found to conform neither to the Sutta nor to the Vinaya, then it should be concluded: ‘Surely, this is not the Blessed One’s Word. It has been wrongly understood by this monk,’ and the matter is to be rejected.

But where, on such checking and examining, they are found to conform to the Sutta and the Vinaya, it should be concluded, **[126]** ‘Surely, this is the Blessed One’s Word. It has been rightly understood by this elder.’

Bhikshus, remember this is the fourth great reference.

Bhikshus, remember these four great references.”

### The three trainings

**4.12** Then the Blessed One, while staying at Ānanda Shrine near Bhoga.nagara, gave a Dharma discourse to a large number of monks, saying,

“This is moral virtue, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when well cultivated with moral virtue, brings great fruit and great profit. Wisdom, when well cultivated with concentration, brings great fruit and great profit. The mind, when well cultivated with wisdom, becomes completely free from the mental influxes, that is to say, from the influx of sensual lust, the influx of existence, the influx of false views and the influx of ignorance.”

## MALLA COUNTRY: PĀVĀ

### Cunda the smith

**4.13** <sup>628</sup>Then the Blessed One, having stayed at the Ānanda Shrine near Bhoga.nagara for as long as he thought fit, addressed the venerable Ānanda:

<sup>627</sup> *Eko thero bhikkhū... bahussuto āgat’āgamo dhamma, dharo vinaya, dharo mātikā, dharo.*

<sup>628</sup> From here [§4.13] until §4.25 = U 8.5/81-85. **The Sarvastivadin version** has this prose introduction based on E. Waldschmidt’s version (*Beiträge zur Textgeschichte des Mahāparinirvanasūtra*, Göttingen, 1939):

“Then the Blessed One, having early robed himself, took his bowl and went with the Great Order to the meal (given by Cunda). The Blessed One and the order sat on the appointed seats. When Cunda saw that all had taken their places, he took foods with his own hands and set them before the Blessed One and the noble order. At that time there was an evil monk, who then stole a copper bowl [SnA 159 says “golden vessel”] by hiding it under his armpit. The Blessed One by his psychic power caused it not to be seen by the people. Only the Buddha and Cunda saw the wrong deed. When Cunda perceived the Blessed One and the order were fully satisfied, he caused pure water, powder, and tooth-sticks to be passed around, and after they had laid their bowls aside and had washed and rinsed their mouths, then Cunda took a low seat, sat down before the Blessed One, and reverently questioned the Blessed One with a verse.” (**Cunda S**, Sn 1.5 = vv 83-90 then follows.) This account parallels that of U 8.5/82 & SnA 159. The Sarvastivadin tradition further has the following verses and prose to close the Cunda S:

Whereby that stupid person commits an evil deed | Such a one causes doubt all round among the good;  
Trust not on outer signs when one stands before you, | Depend not such a one after short acquaintance.  
Common people often make fallacious show, | And ever through the world they go deceiving. ||  
Even as an earring overlaid with gold, | But underneath is copper, base and worthless,  
One who is false within, but seeming real, | Draws to one pupils and misleads the good. ||  
At this time, the Lord seeing the bounty (of the meal offered by Cunda) set forth his merit in a verse:  
One who gives, the merit grows. | Of one restrained, no anger arises.

“Come, Ānanda, let us go to Pāvā.”<sup>629</sup>

“Yes, venerable,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One, together with a large order of monks, reached Pāvā. At Pāvā, the Blessed One stayed in the mango grove of Cunda the smith.<sup>630</sup>

**4.14** Then Cunda the smith heard that the Blessed One had arrived in Pāvā and was staying there at his mango grove.

Then Cunda the smith, approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One and saluted him, he sat down at one side. When Cunda the smith was thus seated at one side, the Blessed One then instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened him with a Dharma talk.<sup>631</sup>

**4.15** Then Cunda the smith, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened with a Dharma talk of the Blessed One, said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One together with the order of monks accept a meal from me tomorrow.”

The Blessed One consented by his silence.

**4.16** Then, Cunda the smith, understanding that the Blessed One had consented (to the invitation), rose from her seat and left.

**4.17** Cunda the smith, by the end of the night,<sup>632</sup> having prepared excellent foods, hard and soft, announced to the Blessed One that it was time:

“Bhante, it is time for the meal.”

### *Sūkara, maddava*<sup>633</sup>

**4.18** Then, the Blessed One, having dressed himself in the morning and taking robe and bowl, went, along with the order of monks, to Cunda the smith’s house, and sat down on the prepared seat. Seated thus, the Blessed One addressed Cunda the smith:

“Cunda, serve me the *sūkara, maddava*<sup>634</sup> that has been prepared, but serve the order of monks with the other hard and soft foods that have been prepared.”<sup>635</sup>

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The good person puts aside base actions. | With lust and hate and delusion gone such a one has nirvana won.

(Cf Dh 224 f). [From *The Mula-sarvastivadin Vinaya*, E Waldschmidt, p66; qu by E J Thomas, *The Quest for Enlightenment*, 1950:72 f. The above translation has been revised by the author.]

<sup>629</sup> According to Comy, **Pāva** (Pāpā) is 3 *gavutas* (about 8 km or 5 miles) from Kusinārā (Kusīnagarī), ie modern Kasia [5.1n]. Modern fieldwork has variously located Pāvā at Padrauna, 19 km (12 mi) north of Kasia, or at Sathiyamva Fazilanagara, 14 km (9 mi) southeast of Kasia in the Meveris district of North Bihar. Walking that distance with great effort and sitting down at 25 places on the way, the Buddha reaches the sal grove when the sun has already set (DA 2:573). See §§4.21, 39, 5.1, where the Buddha complains of his weariness.

<sup>630</sup> On Cunda, see Intro (13). It is stated at the opening of **Saṅgīti S** (D 33) that it is taught by Sāriputta here: see Intro (11c).

<sup>631</sup> See §1.25 n above.

<sup>632</sup> See §1.30a n above.

<sup>633</sup> There is no mention of *sūkara, maddava* in the Tibetan Dulva account.

<sup>634</sup> On *sūkara, maddava*, see Intro (13b).

<sup>635</sup> John Strong, in his notes to *The Buddha: A short biography* (2001:171), highlights the curious omission in the Pali account of an episode that is found in all the other versions of the Buddha’s last meal, that is, the mysterious and confused account of the “evil monk” who steals the bowl of food intended for the Buddha, thus forcing Cunda to prepare a second special meal, or who steals a bowl containing the leftovers of the meal (Bareau 1970-71:258-264).

“Yes, bhante,” Cunda the smith replied in assent to the Blessed One, and he served the Blessed One the *sūkara,maddava* that has been prepared, but served the order of monks with the other hard and soft foods that have been prepared.

**4.19** Then the Blessed One address Cunda the smith:

“Cunda, as for the rest of the *sūkara,maddava*, bury it in a pit. Cunda, I can see no one in the world with its devas, Māras and Brahmās, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and people who, if they were to eat it, could thoroughly digest it except the Tathāgata.”<sup>636</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” Cunda the smith replied in assent to the Blessed One, and then buried the rest of the *sūkara,maddava* in a pit.

Then he approached the Blessed One and having saluted him, sat down at one side. And as Cunda the smith sat at one side, the Blessed One then instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened him with a Dharma talk.<sup>637</sup> Then rising from his seat, he left.

**4.20** Then the Blessed One, on account of having eaten the food prepared by Cunda the smith, a serious illness arose in him, severe pains with bloody diarrhoea, with sharp pains as if he were about to die.<sup>638</sup> But he [128] endured all this mindfully and fully aware, and without complaint.

Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, let us go to Kusinārā.”<sup>639</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

After eating Cunda the smith’s food, I heard,

A serious illness fell upon the wise one, with sharp pains as if bringing death.

And the *sūkara,maddava* that was eaten By the Teacher brought him a serious illness,

Having purged, the Blessed One then said,

“I am going to Kusinārā town.”<sup>640</sup>

**4.21** Then the Blessed One came down from the road and went to the foot of a certain tree, and then addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Please,<sup>641</sup> Ānanda, spread the upper robe [sanghati], folded in four,<sup>642</sup> for me. I am tired, Ānanda, and would like to sit down.”<sup>643</sup>



The last meal (Thai temple mural painting)

<sup>636</sup> Cf Lamotte 1976:313 f.

<sup>637</sup> Evidently, the Buddha’s teachings to Cunda at this point, though nothing is mentioned here, is recorded in the Sutta Nipāta as **Cunda S** (Sn Sn 1.5 = vv 83-90) [4.13n]. The Aṅguttara has the relatively long **Cunda Kammāra-putta S** (A 10.176/5:263-268), where Cunda takes refuge. See §1.25 n above.

<sup>638</sup> This is the second attack of dysentery. The first attack mentioned at §2.23. On whether the Buddha was poisoned, see Intro (13a).

<sup>639</sup> Kusinārā (Skt Kuśī,nagarī) is about 80 km southeast of Pāvā.

<sup>640</sup> Comy says that these verses (like those at §§38 & 41) are probably those of the Council elders (cf DA 615).

<sup>641</sup> *līgha*, alt tr, “come now!”



“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One, and he spread the upper robe, folded in four, for him.

## KAKUTTHĀ RIVER

### The clearing of the water

**4.22** The Blessed One sat down on the prepared seat. Seated thus, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Please, Ānanda, bring me some water. I am thirsty, Ānanda, I wish to drink.”

When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Just now, bhante, at least five hundred carts have crossed over it. The shallow water, disturbed by the wheels, flows murky and dirty. Bhante, this Kakutthā river, not far off, has clear, [129] sweet, cool and clean water, easy to ford and delightful.<sup>644</sup>

**4.23** For the second time, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Please, Ānanda, bring me some water. I am thirsty, Ānanda, I wish to drink.”

For the second time, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Just now, bhante, at least five hundred carts have crossed over it. The shallow water, disturbed by the wheels, flows murky and dirty. Bhante, this Kakutthā river, not far off, has clear, sweet, cool and clean water, easy to ford and delightful.

**4.24** For the third time, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Please, Ānanda, bring me some water. I am thirsty, Ānanda, I wish to drink.”<sup>645</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One, and taking a bowl he went to the stream.

Then the shallow stream over which at least five hundred carts had crossed, its waters flowing murky and dirty, disturbed by the wheels, *flowed clear, bright and clean, even as the venerable Ānanda approached it.*

**4.25** Then this occurred to the venerable Ānanda:

“How wonderful! How marvellous! Great is the Tathāgata’s power, great is his glory! This shallow stream over which at least five hundred carts had crossed, its waters flowing murky and dirty, disturbed by the wheels, now flows clear, bright and clean, even as I approach it!”

Carrying the bowl of water, he approached the Blessed One, and said this to him:

“How wonderful, bhante! How marvellous, bhante! Great is the Tathāgata’s power, great is his glory! This shallow stream, bhante, over which at least five hundred carts had crossed, its waters flowing murky and dirty, disturbed by the wheels, now flows clear, bright and clean even as I approach it! Let the Blessed One drink this water, let the Sugata [Wellfarer] drink this water.”

Then the Blessed One drank the water.<sup>646</sup> [130]

<sup>642</sup> On “folded in four” (*catu-g.guṇam*), see §4.39 n.

<sup>643</sup> According to Comy, Pāva (Pāpā) is three *gavutas* (approximately 8 km or 5 miles) from Kusinārā (Kusīnagarī). Walking that distance with great effort and sitting down at 25 places on the way, the Buddha reaches the sal grove when the sun has already set (DA 2:573). Thus illness comes to a man, crushing all his health. As if he wants to point to this fact, the Buddha speaks these deeply moving words: “I am weary, Ānanda, and wish to sit down” (*ki-anto’smi Ānanda nisīdissāmi*) here [§4.21]. On reaching the Upavattana sal grove near Kusinārā, the Buddha says, “I am weary, Ānanda, I wish lie down (*nipajjissāmi*)” [§5.1]: see §4.39, where he says the same to Cundaka.

<sup>644</sup> *Acchôdikā* [elsewhere *acchôdakā*] *sâtôdakā sītôdakā setakā supatīhitā ramañīyā* (D 2:128; M 1:76 = 283 = S 1:91 = A 3:190; A 3:238). CPD (*acchôdaka*): *Kakuttham acchôdi,sâtôdika,vippasannam*, D 2:135\*, is a haplogy (accidental omission) as in *somana,domanassam*, Sn 67, see Sadd 3:158.

<sup>645</sup> The Tibetan Dulva version says that at Ānanda’s request, the Buddha does not drink the water of the Kakutthana [Kakutthā] river, but only washes his body with it (f 582<sup>a</sup>) (Rockhill 1884:134).

<sup>646</sup> For a similar miraculous story—this time, a well in the brahmin village of Thūṇa that has been filled up with grass and chaff to prevent the monks from drawing water therefrom—but on the Buddha’s instructions, Ānanda goes to the well which opens itself up and Ānanda is able to draw water, The Buddha the utters this *udāna*: “What is there to do with a well | if there is always water? | Having cut craving at its root, | what is there to one wander about seeking?” (U 7.9/78 f).

### Pukkusa Malla,putta

**4.26** <sup>647</sup> Now at that time, Pukkusa Malla,putta <sup>648</sup> a disciple of Āḷāra Kālāma, <sup>649</sup> was going along the highway from Kusināra to Pāvā. Then Pukkusa Malla,putta saw the Blessed One sitting under a certain tree. Having approached the Blessed One, he saluted him and sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, Pukkusa Malla,putta said this to the Blessed One:

‘It is wonderful, bhante! It is marvellous, bhante! How those gone forth, bhante, dwell in peace!

**4.27** PUKKUSA’S STORY OF ĀḶĀRA. Once, bhante, Āḷāra Kālāma, going along the highway, came down from it and sat down under a certain tree for the midday rest. Then, bhante, at least five hundred carts passed very close by him. Then, bhante, a certain man following close behind the caravan of carts approached Āḷāra Kālāma, and then said this to him:

‘But, bhante, did you not see that at least five hundred carts had passed by?’

‘No, avuso, I did not see them.’

‘Then, bhante, did you not hear any sound?’

‘No avuso, I did not hear any sound.’

‘But, bhante, were you not asleep?’

‘No, avuso, I was not asleep.’

‘Then, bhante, were you conscious?’

‘Yes, avuso.’

‘So, bhante, you were both conscious and awake as at least five hundred carts passed very close by you, and yet you did not see them, nor hear a sound—but, bhante, your upper robe is covered with dust!’

‘Yes, avuso.’

Then, bhante, this occurred to that person:

‘It is wonderful, bhante! It is marvellous, bhante! How those gone forth, bhante, dwell in peace! And he is both conscious [131] and awake as at least five hundred carts passed very close by you, and yet you did not see them, nor hear a sound!’

After expressing his deep faith in Āḷāra Kālāma, he left.”

### The threshing house near Ātumā

**4.28** “What do you think, Pukkusa? Which do you think is more difficult to do or to attain to—being both conscious and awake as at least five hundred carts passed very close by one, but one were neither to see nor to hear them, or being both conscious and awake while it is raining, lightning flashing and thunder bursting, and one were neither to see them nor to hear them?”

**4.29** “Indeed, bhante, how can one compare five hundred carts or six hundred carts or seven hundred carts or eight hundred carts or nine hundred carts or a thousand carts, or hundreds of thousands of carts? It would be more difficult to be both conscious and awake while it is raining, lightning flashing and thunder bursting, and one were neither to see them nor to hear them.”

<sup>647</sup> The following sections [§§26-38]—Pukkusa’s offer of the golden robes and the transfiguration—are unique this Sutta.

<sup>648</sup> **Pukkusa Malla,putta** (Skt Putkasa Malla,putra/Mālya,putra) (M 2:152; A 2:85; J 4:205, 306; Lalv 21.17. Comy says that Pukkusa is probably a name (not a tribe or caste), as the Mallas were kshatriyas. Pukkusa was the owner of the 500 carts that had just passed by (DA 569). If Pukkusa has met Āḷāra himself, he (the former) must be more than 45 years old, perhaps 65 (if he meets Āḷāra when he is 20), in which case *Malla,putta* cannot be tr as “the young Malla.” Perhaps “the Malla noble” would be more appropriate. Āḷāra is said to have died “seven days ago” (M 26.22/1:170 = SD 1.11), ie counting from the time the Buddha decides to teach the Dharma (V 1:7; M 1:170; S 1:138; D 2:39 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:318; cf. S:B 1:233 n372; also Sn 1146c): see **Why the Buddha “hesitated”** = SD 12.1(2-3).

<sup>649</sup> **Āḷāra**, one of the Bodhisattva’s early teachers, taught him meditation up to the sphere of nothingness (*ākāṅkacāṇā’āyatana*). Buddhaghosa says that Āḷāra was also called Dīgha,piṅgala; **Kālāma** was his family name (DA 2:-569 = MA 2:171). The story of the Bodhisattva’s first two teachers is found in **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26.15/1:163-168), **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36/1:240; **Saṅgarāva S** (M 100/2:212); **Madhyam’āgama** of the Sarvāstivāda (T26.-776b5-777a4; **Vinaya** of the Dharmaguptakas (T1428.780bt-c19); cf J 1:66; DhA 1:85; ApA 71; BA 6; DhsA 34; MahvsT 66. See SD 1.11(15) (Ariyapariyesanā S).

**4.30** <sup>650</sup>“At one time, Pukkusa, I was staying in a threshing house near Ātumā.<sup>651</sup> It then began raining, lightning flashing and thunder bursting, and two farmers of the threshing house, who were brothers, and four oxen, were killed. Then, Pukkusa, a great crowd of people came out of Ātumā and came to the place where the two brothers who were farmers and the four oxen were killed.

**4.31** Then, Pukkusa, I came out of the threshing house to walk back and forth in the open. Then, Pukkusa, a certain person from the great crowd approached me. Having saluted, he stood at one side, and standing thus at one side, Pukkusa, I said this to that person:

**4.32** ‘Avuso, why has such a great crowd of people gathered together?’ [132]

‘Bhante, it was raining now, lightning flashing and thunder bursting, and two farmers who were brothers, and four oxen, have been killed. Then, bhante, a great crowd of people has come out of Ātumā and come to the place where the two brothers who were farmers and the four oxen were killed. So the great crowd of people has gathered here, but, bhante, where were you?’

‘I was right here, avuso.’

‘But, bhante, did you not see anything?’

‘No, avuso, I did not see anything.’

‘Then, bhante, did you not hear any sound?’

‘No avuso, I did not hear any sound.’

‘But, bhante, were you not asleep?’

‘No, avuso, I was not asleep.’

‘Then, bhante, were you conscious?’

‘Yes, avuso.’

‘So, bhante, you were both conscious and awake while it was raining, lightning flashing and thunder bursting, but you neither saw anything nor heard a sound!’

‘Yes, avuso.’



### Pukkusa the last layman

**4.33** Then, Pukkusa, this occurred to that person:

‘It is wonderful, bhante! It is marvellous, bhante! How those gone forth, bhante, dwell in peace! And he is both conscious and awake while it was raining, lightning flashing and thunder bursting, but you neither saw anything nor heard a sound!’

After expressing his deep faith in me, he saluted, and going rightwise, left.’

**4.34** Hearing this, Pukkusa Malla,putta said this to the Blessed One:

‘Bhante, this faith I have in Āḷāra Kālāma is blown away [winnowed away] by a great wind, and washed away by the swift currents of a great river! It is wonderful, bhante! It is marvellous, bhante!

Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned, or were to reveal what was hidden, or were to show the way to one who was lost, or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way, in numerous ways, the Dharma has been made clear by the Blessed One.

I go to this very Blessed One for refuge, [133] to the Dharma, and to the community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a layman who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life.’<sup>652</sup>

### The gold-coloured robes

**4.35** Then Pukkusa Malla,putta addressed a certain man [worker]:

<sup>650</sup> §4.30 here as at V 1:249 f (story of Subhadda, “one gone forth in old age” [§5.23]).

<sup>651</sup> The threshing house near Ātumā. It was here, says the Vinaya, on account of the **Subhadda**, “one gone forth in old age” that the Buddha laid down two rules entailing wrong-doing (*dukkaṭa*). On hearing of the Buddha’s passing, expressed his relief [§6.20]. See V 1:249 f. See §6.20n below.

<sup>652</sup> This makes Pukkusa the last layman to take refuge before the Buddha himself.

“I say there, please bring me a pair of gold-coloured robes, burnished and ready for wearing.”<sup>653</sup>

“Yes, bhante,”<sup>654</sup> the man replied in assent to Pukkusa Malla,putta, and then brought the pair of gold-coloured robes, burnished and ready for wearing.

Then Pukkusa Malla,putta offered the pair of gold-coloured robes, burnished and ready for wearing to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One, out of compassion, accept this pair of gold-coloured robes, burnished and ready for wearing.”

“In that case, Pukkusa, dress<sup>655</sup> me in one, and (give) the other to Ānanda.”<sup>656</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” Pukkusa replied in assent to the Blessed One, and then dressed the Blessed One in one (of the robes), and (gave) the other to Ānanda.<sup>657</sup>

**4.36** Then the Blessed One instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened Pukkusa Malla,putta with Dharma talk. Having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened with a Dharma talk by the Blessed One, Pukkusa Malla,putta then rose from his seat, and having saluted the Blessed One, left.

### The transfiguration

**4.37** Then not long after Pukkusa Malla,putta had left, the venerable Ānanda arranged<sup>658</sup> the pair of gold-coloured ready-to-wear robes on the Blessed One, and as he did so, it appeared to have lost its radiance.

Then the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“It is wonderful, bhante! It is marvellous, bhante! How exceedingly pure and clear, bhante, is the Tathāgata’s complexion! Bhante, when this pair of gold-coloured ready-to-wear robes [134] is placed on the Blessed One’s body, it appears to have lost its radiance!”<sup>659</sup>

“Such it is, Ānanda. There are two occasions, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata’s complexion appears exceedingly pure and clear. What are the two?”

On the night when the Tathāgata awakens to the supreme self-awakening, Ānanda, and on the night when he attains to the remainderless nirvana-element at his final passing.<sup>660</sup>

**4.38** Ānanda, in the last watch<sup>661</sup> tonight, the Tathāgata’s parinirvana will occur between the twin sal<sup>662</sup> trees in the sal grove of the Mallas in Upavattana [Upavattana Wood] near Kusinārā.

<sup>653</sup> “A pair of gold-coloured robes, ready for wearing,” *siṅgi,vaṇṇaṃ yugaṃ maṭṭaṃ dhāraṇīyaṃ*. These two robes are probably the outer robe (*uttarāsaṅga*), covering the whole body and the upper robe (*saṅghāṭi*), worn folded over the left shoulder: cf V 1:94. The upper robe is doubled up with the outer robe for keeping oneself warm, or folded up as a seat [§4.21] or for lying on [§4.29], or used as an outer robe when the soiled robe is washed and dried. The two robes are identical in form. However, the text here does not mention what kind of robe “the pair” are.

<sup>654</sup> Or, “reverend sir.” Here the man is addressing Pukkusa, who was obviously a man of means. See **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97.27a/2:192): SD 4.9 §27a n.

<sup>655</sup> *Upanāmesi*, fr *upanāmeti*, “he offers; he arranges or places.” See §4.37.

<sup>656</sup> *Tena hi Pukkusa ekena maṃ acchādehi ekena Ānandaṃ*. That is, Ānanda is simply keeping the robe on the Buddha’s behalf.

<sup>657</sup> *Ekena Bhagavantaṃ acchādesi, ekena āyasmantaṃ Ānandaṃ*. If we take it that Ānanda is the recipient one of the two robes, it is clearly problematic in that Ānanda is receiving a share of choice robes, when the very first condition that Ānanda sets for becoming the Buddha’s personal attendant is “the Buddha should never pass on to him any choice robes he has received” (J 4:96; ThaA 3:112): see Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:6.3. See D:W 573 n421: “This ridiculous story is probably a late insertion.” However, it should be noted that after Pukkusa had left, Ānanda arranged the second robe on the Buddha.

<sup>658</sup> *Upanāmesi*, see 4.35n.

<sup>659</sup> Comy: It seems as if the radiance was gone, like coals whose bright flames have departed (*yathā hat’acciko aṅgāro ant’anten’eva jotati, bahi paṇ’assa pabhā n’atthi, evaṃ bahi paṭicchanna-p,pabham hutvā khāyatī ti attho*, DA 570).

<sup>660</sup> On the term *parinibbāna*, see **Intro (15)** above.

<sup>661</sup> Traditionally, **the Buddha’s day** is divided into five periods: the forenoon, the afternoon, the first watch, the middle watch, and the last watch. Rising early (ie about 4-5 am), the Buddha rouses in himself the attainment of great compassion (*mahā, karuṇā, samāpatti*) and surveys the world with his divine eye to see whom he can help. **Forenoon:** During the early hours of dawn, the Buddha attends to his bodily needs and toilet. Then he sits down in solitary medita-



Come, Ānanda, let us go to **the Kakutthā river**.<sup>663</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Pukkusa brings a pair of gold-coloured robes, burnished and ready for wear,  
When the Teacher dons it, his gold-hued complexion shines forth bright.<sup>664</sup>

### The elder Cundaka

**4.39**<sup>665</sup> Then the Blessed One together with the great order of monks went to the Kakutthā river. There, they bathed, drank and came out of the river, and headed for the mango grove. There, the Blessed One addressed the venerable **Cundaka**.<sup>666</sup>

tion or retreat (*paṭisallāna*), after which he (DA 1:45). **Afternoon:** After his noon meal, he surveys the mental dispositions of his audience and delivers a discourse, advising them on the Dharma and its practice, and establishes them in the Refuges and the Precepts. During the third part of the afternoon, towards evening, the people dwelling nearby, who have given alms in the morning, having dressed and groomed themselves, and bringing perfumes, garlands and other offerings, assemble in the monastery. The Buddha sits on his special seat in the assembly hall and teaches the Dharma in a way fitting to the occasion and audience.

After his afternoon activities, the Buddha returns to his cell to spend a period of solitary retreat. The **first watch of the night** (*paṭhama-* or *purima,yāma*), extending from 6 to 10 pm, is exclusively reserved for the instruction of the order members who have arrived from various directions to attend upon the Buddha. Some ask questions, some inquire about points of Dharma, some request meditation subjects. After the order members have dispersed, during the **middle watch** (*majjhima,yāma*), extending from 10 pm to 2 am, heavenly beings approach the Buddha to consult him. **The last watch** (*pacchima,yāma*), lasting from 2 to 6 am, is divided into two sessions (DA 147). Because his body aches from sitting for long periods since early morning, the Buddha spends the first portion of the last watch mindfully pacing up and down (*caṅkamana*) to dispel the discomfort. During the second part of the last watch (ie around 3 to 5 am), the Buddha enters the Fragrant Cell and mindfully sleeps, experiencing nirvanic or dhyanic bliss. In other words, the Buddha sleeps only about two hours daily. Finally, during the third part of the last watch, just before dawn, he rises, takes a seat and rouses in himself the attainment of great compassion. Cultivating thoughts of lovingkindness towards all beings, he surveys the world with his Buddha-eye and seeks out those who have observed their duties (eg giving alms and keeping to the Precepts in the presence of past Buddhas) and to whom he can assist spiritually.

<sup>662</sup> *Sāla* (Skt *śāla*), the sal tree, *Shorea robusta* (D 2:134; M 1:448; A 1:209, 3:49, 214; Dh 162). This is said to be the tree under which the Bodhisattva is born in Lumbinī park, lying between Kapila,vatthu and Deva,daha (J 1:52, 328; ApA 57).

<sup>663</sup> **Kakuṭṭhā river** divides Kusinārā (Kusīnagarī) and Pāvā (Pāpā) (D 2:129, 134 ff; U 7.5). It is called Cocouthes by the ancient Greek writers. Today the river is called the Kuku. Some scholars, however, identify it with the modern Ghāgī, a small stream flowing into the Little Gandak, about 3 km (2 miles) to the west of Chitiyaon in the Gorakhpur district.

<sup>664</sup> T W Rhys Davids notes in his tr: “We have here the commencement of the legend which afterwards grew into an account of an actual ‘transfiguration’ of the Buddha. It is very curious that it should have taken place soon after the Buddha had announced to Ānanda his approaching death, and that in the Buddhist Sutta it should be connected so closely with that event; for a similar remark applies to the Transfiguration mentioned in the Gospels.” (D:RD 2:146 n1). It is said of Jesus Christ that “his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them” (Mark 9:2-8; Matt 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36; RSV). In the case of the Buddha, it is his whole body that radiates greatly, some 500 years (or at least 200 years in terms of the recorded tradition) before the biblical story. See **Miracles** = SD SD 27.5(2.1.3+4)

<sup>665</sup> Foll §§ [4.39-43] as at U 8.5.

<sup>666</sup> It is possible that this **Cundaka or Cunda** (see next sentence) is the same as Mahā Cunda and Cunda Samaṇ‘uddesa, the younger brother of Sāriputta. Cunda Samaṇ‘uddesa appears in both **Pāsādika S** (D 29) and **Sāmagāma S** (M 104). It is significant that in Pāsādika S, the Buddha, at the height of his instruction, tells him, “But now I am an elder teacher of long standing, Cunda, one long gone forth, whose journey is done, my life is coming to a close” (*aham kho pana Cunda etarahi sathā thero rattaññū cira,pabbajito addha,gato vayo anuppatto*) (D 29.14/3:125). It is possible that these two Suttas record events occurring at this point in our Sutta here in connection with Cunda. There is an anachronism, however: Mahāvīra predeceases the Buddha, dying in 527 BCE; the Buddha dies in c405 BCE (traditional date: 543 BCE). A L Basham, in his *History and Doctrine of the Ājīvikas*, London, 1951, thinks that Makkhali Gosāla may be meant here. See DPPN: 2. Cunda. See also **Pāsādika S** (D 29) @ SD 401.6 (3).

“Please, Cundaka, spread the upper robe [sanghati], folded in four, for me. I am tired, Cundaka, and would like to lie down.”<sup>667</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Cundaka replied in assent to the Blessed One, and he prepared the upper robe, folded in four.

**4.40** Then the Blessed One laid himself down on his right lion-like, resting foot on foot, mindful and fully aware, [135] mentally noting the time for rising.<sup>668</sup> The venerable Cundaka sat down right there before the Blessed One.

**4.41** The Buddha, going to the Kakutthā river,

Clear, clean and bright,  
The Teacher immersed his weary frame,  
The Buddha unequalled in the world.  
Having bathed and drunk, the Teacher then emerged,  
Leading on, in the midst of the group of monks.  
The Teacher, the Blessed One, who points out the Dharma here.  
The great sage to the mango grove came.  
He addressed the monk called Cundaka,  
“Spread me a place to lie on.”  
The joyful Cunda[ka], one of mind well cultured,  
At once spread out a robe folded in four.  
The Teacher laid down his weary frame,  
And right there before him sat Cunda[ka].

### Exoneration of Cunda

**4.42** Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“It might be, Ānanda, one might cause remorse in Cunda the smith, saying, ‘It is your loss, avuso Cunda, it is by your failure [defeat] that the Tathāgata attained parinirvana after taking his alms-meal from you!’”<sup>669</sup>

But Cunda’s remorse should be dispelled in this way:

‘This is your gain, Cunda, it is your great gain [victory], that the Tathāgata attained parinirvana after taking his last alms-meal from you! For, avuso Cunda, I have heard and understood from the Blessed One’s own mouth that these two alms-meals [136] are of the very same fruit, of very same result, and more fruitful and more profitable than any other. Which two?’

The one is the alms-meal after eating which the Tathāgata awakens to supreme awakening<sup>670</sup> and the other, after which the Tathāgata attains the remainderless nirvana-element at his final passing. These two almsgiving are of the very same fruit, of very same result, and more fruitful and more profitable than any other.

<sup>667</sup> *Īṅha me tvam cundaka catu-g,guṇam saṅghāṭim paññāpehi, kilanto ’smi cundaka nipajjissāmī ti.* Here, “folded in four” (*catu-g,guṇam*) means that the robe is folded *twice* over, ie, it is stretched lengthwise along the “fold” (*vivaṭṭa*), comprising the “neck half-circle” (*aḍḍha,maṇḍala, gīveyyaka*) and the “knee folding circle” (*maṇḍala vivaṭṭa, jaṅgheyvaka*) (V 1:287), ie, folded halfway by, say, two persons, holding it lengthwise by its top corners, and then one more similar fold. This length however would reach just above the ankles, or one could use some sort of pillow for the head and let the robe-length reach under the feet. See CS Upasak 1975:89.

<sup>668</sup> “Mentally noting the time for rising” when one is going to sleep is an example of “sleeping mindfully,” mentioned in **Sati,paṭṭhāna S** (M 10.8(7)/1:57). In **Pacalā S** (A 7.58), the Buddha exhorts, “Moggallāna, mindful and fully aware, you should lie down lion-like on your right side, placing foot on foot, keeping in mind the thought that on awakening, you would get up quickly, thinking, ‘I will dwell without indulging in the pleasure of sleep, or in the pleasure of reclining, or in the pleasure of drowsiness’” (*na seyya, dukham na passa, sukham na middha, sukham anuyutto*) (A 7.58/4:87) = SD 4.11. On this mental noting of rising up again, see also n at §5.1.

<sup>669</sup> See §§4.18-20.

<sup>670</sup> That is, the gift made just before the great awakening at Buddha, gayā, but no mention is made of its giver—according to the Theravada tradition, it is the lady Sujātā: see Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004 §2.18.

By Cunda the smith is piled up karma conducive to long life.  
 By Cunda the smith is piled up karma conducive to beauty.  
 By Cunda the smith is piled up karma conducive to happiness.  
 By Cunda the smith is piled up karma conducive to fame.  
 By Cunda the smith is piled up karma conducive to a heavenly life.  
 By Cunda the smith is piled up karma conducive to greatness [lordship].<sup>7</sup>  
 In this way, is Cunda the smith's remorse to be expelled.”

**4.43** Then the Blessed One, knowing the purpose of the moment, uttered this verse of uplift:

To one who gives, merit grows; to the restrained, no anger heaps.  
 The skillful one casts off evil; destroying lust, hate and delusion, he is cooled.

## Chapter 5

(Fifth Recital, *pañcama bhāṇavāra*: the Hiraññavatī)

### KUSINĀRĀ: THE FINAL HOURS

#### The Upavattana Sal Grove

[137] **5.1** <sup>671</sup>Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

<sup>672</sup>“Come, Ānanda, let us go to **the sal grove** of the Mallas at **Upavattana**,<sup>673</sup> Kusināra, on the farther bank of the Hirañña,vaṭī river.<sup>674</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One, together with a large order of monks, went to the Upavattana sal grove of the Mallas on the banks across the Hirañña,vaṭī river, near Kusināra.

Then he addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Please, Ānanda, prepare a couch for me, with its head to the north,<sup>675</sup> between the twin sal trees. I am tired, Ānanda, I wish to lie down.”

<sup>671</sup> The following sections [§§5.1-11]—the sal grove; Upavāṇa; the devas' lamentations; the 4 holy places; monks' attitude to women; treatment of the Buddha's remains—are all unique to this Sutta.

<sup>672</sup> *Āyāma'ānanda hiraññā,vaṭiyā nadiyā pārima,tīraṃ yena kusiṇārā,upavattanaṃ mallānaṃ sāla,vanaṃ ten'upa-saṃkamissāma' ti*. As at **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17.1.2.1/2:169) = SD 36.12; Divy 208.25, 209.3; see Dīpv 6.19.

<sup>673</sup> The row of sāla-trees stretched from south-west corner of Kusināra eastwards and then northwards towards the southern city-gate. The grove was SW of Kusināra (UA 238). **Upavattana** (Skt *upavartana* = recreation ground): the sāla grove there belongs to the Mallas of Kusināra, their capital (D 2:137). Upavattana is prob the name of the locality in which the grove is located: see Dīpv 6.19 & long def & refs at BHSD: upavartana.

<sup>674</sup> The **Hirañña,vaṭī** (Hiraṇya,vaṭī) river runs by Upavattana sāla grove. Crossing the Hirañña,vaṭī (Skt Hiraṇya-vaṭī), the Buddha reaches the Upavattana sal grove of the Mallas (D 2:146, 170; S 1:157 = A 2:79; J 1:392, 5:278; Divy 152 ff). The Hiraṇyavaṭī river is today called the Little Gandak, flowing through district of Gorakhpur about 13 km (8 miles) to the west of the Great Gandak and falls into the Ghogra. Kusināra is located near modern Kasia in the district of Deoria, Uttar Pradesh. The site of **Kusināra** is certainly to be in the extensive ruins near the present village of Kasia at the junction of the Rapti river and the Little Gandak river (the ancient Hiraṇyavaṭī, a tributary of the Śarayu or Ghaghara), 60 km (37 mi) east of Gorakhpur and on the border of North Bihar. The Mallas of Kusināra and the Mallas of Pāvā were located to the east and south of the Koliyas. See J Finegan, *An Archaeological History of Religions of Indian Asia*, 1989:81 f.

<sup>675</sup> In other words, the Buddha is lying down in a north-south alignment in harmony with the geomagnetic flow of the earth, as it were. It is probable that the Buddha lies on his right lion-like, and so faces the west (the setting sun), unlike when he awakens to the supreme self-awakening when he faces the east (the rising sun) (J 1:71). Lying in this manner, too, would be proper as the setting sun would shine in his face. Anyway, Comys did not attach any special meaning to *uttara,sīsaka* (with the head to the north), only noting that it is traditionally said that there was a row of sal trees at the head (*sīsa*) of the couch, and another close to it foot. The twin sal trees were so called because the two trees were equally grown as regards roots, trunks and branches and foliage. There was a couch (or bench) in the park for special use of the Malla chief, and it was this couch that the Blessed One instructed Ānanda to prepare. (DA 2:573). The 7<sup>th</sup> cent sub-commentator, Dhammapāla, in fact, rejects the view of some that the Buddha wanted to lie

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One, and he prepared a couch for the Blessed One, with its head to the north, between the twin sal trees. Then the Blessed One laid himself down on his right, lion-like, resting foot on foot, mindful and fully aware.<sup>676</sup>

**5.2** <sup>677</sup>Then at that time, the twin sal trees burst forth in full blossom and fruit, albeit untimely, the blossoms falling on the Blessed One’s body, showering down upon it, covering it up, in homage to the Tathāgata. Heavenly mandārava [coral tree] flowers fell from the sky, heavenly sandalwood powder fell from the sky, showering down upon the Blessed One’s body, [138] covering it up, in homage to the Tathāgata. Heavenly music resounded through the sky in homage to the Tathāgata. Heavenly songs wafted through the sky in homage to the Tathāgata.

### The supreme worship

**5.3a** Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, the twin sal trees are bursting forth with full blossom and fruit, albeit untimely, the blossoms falling on the Tathagata’s body, showering down upon it, covering it up, in homage to the Tathagata. Heavenly mandārava [coral tree] flowers are falling from the sky, heavenly sandalwood powder are falling from the sky, showering down upon the Tathagata’s body, covering it up, in homage to the Tathagata.

Heavenly music is resounding through the sky in homage to the Tathāgata. Heavenly songs are wafting through the sky in homage to the Tathagata.<sup>678</sup>

**5.3b** But, Ānanda, this is not the way to honour, respect, revere, worship, or esteem the Tathagata.<sup>679</sup> Ānanda, whatever monk, nun, layman or laywoman<sup>680</sup> practises the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, properly practising, living in accordance with Dharma, he honours the Tathagata, respects him, reveres him, worships him with **the supreme worship**.<sup>681</sup> Therefore, Ānanda, consider thus:

“We will practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, properly practising, dwelling in accordance with the Dharma!”—this is how you should train yourself.”<sup>682</sup>

down facing the east, and attached no special significance to the couch arrangement (DAT 2:224). Rhys Davids notes that the *uttara,śīsaka* “may have been the name for a slab of wood or stone reserved on great occasion for the use of the leaders of the neighbouring republic, but available at other times to passers-by” (D:RD 2:149 n1).

<sup>676</sup> *Atha kho Bhagavā dakkhiṇena passena siha,seyyam kappesi pāde pādāṃ accādhāya sato sampajāno*. Note that the phrase, *uṭṭhāna,saññāṃ manasikarivā*, “mentally noting the time for rising,” is omitted here. Elsewhere, the stock phrase for the Buddha’s act of lying down to rest reads, “Then the Blessed One lay down on his right side, lion-like, with one foot on top of the other, mindful and fully aware, mentally noting the time for rising” [§4.40]. Here, however, the Buddha is lying down for the last time and will pass away in this posture. As such, he makes no mental note to get up in due course.

<sup>677</sup> This miraculous episode not mentioned in the Tibetan Dulva (Rockhill 1884:135).

<sup>678</sup> *Sabba,phāliphullā kho Ānanda yamaka,sālā akāla,pupphēhi Tathāgatassa sarīraṃ okiranti ajjhokiranti abhipakiranti Tathāgatassa pūjāya. Dibbāni pi mandārava,pupphāni antalikkhā papanti, tāni Tathāgatassa sarīraṃ okiranti ajjhokiranti abhipakiranti Tathāgatassa pūjāya, dibbāni pi candana,cuṇṇāni antalikkhā papanti, tāni Tathāgatassa sarīraṃ okiranti ajjhokiranti abhipakiranti Tathāgatassa pūjāya. Dibbāni pi turīyāni antalikkhe vajjenti Tathāgatassa pūjāya. Dibbāni pi saṅgītāni antalikkhe vajjenti Tathāgatassa pūjāya*. This identical passage [§5.3a] appears in the previous para [§5.2], but I have rendered it here differently according to English idiom. The versatility of Pali syntax in terms of tense (both using the historical present) is evident here, but not reflected in the English tr

<sup>679</sup> See **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35), where the arhat is said to do all this by declaring that the Buddha is “awakened...; mentally tamed...; stilled...; crossed over...; quenched...” and “teaches the Dharma” for the same of these (M 35.-26b/1:235) = SD 26.5.

<sup>680</sup> Note here that this important exhortation on the “supreme worship” is addressed to all the 4 companies (monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen). However, there is evidence of a monastic-lay distinction here in Buddhaghosa’s commentary: see Intro (7b).

<sup>681</sup> “**Supreme worship**,” *paramā pūjā*, alt tr “highest homage,” ie the highest puja: see **Intro (7b)** above. On the story of Dhamm’ārāma, see Intro (14). Cf **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35), where in a similar connection, the arhat is said to accomplish in the 3 supremacies (*anuttariya*) (M 35.26b/1:235) = SD 26.5.

<sup>682</sup> *Tasmāt ih’ Ānanda dhammānudhamma,paṭipannā viharissāma samīci,paṭipannā anudhamma,cārinō ti, evaṃ hi vo Ānanda sikkhitabban ti*. Comy’s explanations of the key words here, see Intro (7b).



## Upavāna and seeing the Buddha<sup>683</sup>

**5.4** Now at the time, the venerable **Upavāna**<sup>684</sup> was standing in front of the Blessed One, fanning him.<sup>685</sup> Then the Blessed One dismissed<sup>686</sup> him, saying:

“Move aside, monk, do not stand in front of me!”

Then the venerable Ānanda thought, “This [139] venerable Upavāna has been the Blessed One’s personal attendant for a long time, always near at hand and available.<sup>687</sup> What is the reason, what is the cause [condition], that the Blessed One dismisses him, saying, ‘Move aside, monk, do not stand in front of me!’?”

**5.5** Then the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, this venerable Upavāna has been the Blessed One’s personal attendant for a long time, always near at hand and available. What is the reason, what is the cause [condition], that the Blessed One dismisses him, saying, ‘Move aside, monk, do not stand in front of me!’?”

“Ānanda, the devatas [gods] of the ten world-bases<sup>688</sup> have gathered in great numbers to see the Tathāgata. Ānanda, for twelve yojanas [leagues]<sup>689</sup> around the Upavattana sal grove of the Mallas near Kusinārā, there is not a spot even the size of the pricking tip of a hair that is not filled by a mighty devata.<sup>690</sup> Ānanda, the devatas are upset [murmuring in protest], saying:

‘We have come from afar just for the sight of the Tathāgata. Very rarely<sup>691</sup> do the Tathāgatas, the arhats [worthy ones], the fully self-awakened ones, arise in the world, and tonight in the last watch, the

<sup>683</sup> In the Tibetan Dulva account, this Upavāna episode is inserted after the Mahā Sudassana story [§5.18].

<sup>684</sup> An elder of Sāvattihī and one of the Buddha’s attendants. See Tha 185 f for his verses (also S 7.13; cf Miln 134, Miln:H 1:187 n8) & Tha:RD 350 for an allusion to this incident (ThaA 2:56 f). On his orig: Ap 22/70,22-74,7 (ApA 343,27 f). **Devahita S** (S 7.13) records how Upavāna, as the Buddha’s attendant, attends to him when he was suffering from wind illness (S 7.13/1:174 f ≈ DhA 4:232,18). In **Upavāna S** (S 35.70), he asks the Buddha on the meaning of *sandiṭṭhika* (directly visible; seen for oneself) which the Buddha explains it as that of direct awareness of just as it arises through sense-experience (S 35.70/4:41-44). In **Pāsādika S** (D 29), he fans the Buddha as he teaches, and the Sutta title is to his credit (D 29.41/3:141) = SD 40a.6. See CPD sv.

<sup>685</sup> See above §1.4n where Ānanda fans the Buddha.

<sup>686</sup> “Dismissed,” reading *apasāreti* (Be), which Comy glosses as *apanesi* (DA 2:579); vI *apasādeti*, “he rebukes” [PTS *apasādesi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> sg].

<sup>687</sup> “Personal attendant...available,” *upaṭṭhāko santikāvacarō samīpa,cārī*, lit “a personal attendant who moves in the vicinity, who wanders nearby.”

<sup>688</sup> “Ten world-spheres,” *dasa loka,dhātu*, here Comys gloss as *dasa,sahassa,cakkavāla* (the ten-thousandfold universe) (DA 2:678; SA 1:74). **Cosmology**: “The world (*loka*) in its broadest sense includes the whole cosmos, but within this there are smaller units known as ‘world-systems’ (*loka,dhātu*), which corresponds roughly to solar systems. Such a unit consists of the sun and moon, Mt Meru, four continents, four oceans, the four great Kings (*loka,-pāla, catur.mahā,rāja*), and the sevenfold heavenly spheres. One thousand of these units together forms a ‘small world system,’ and the ‘medium’ and ‘large’ systems are each one thousand times greater than the one below. These larger world systems correspond to the modern concept of a galaxy. The cosmos is believed to be infinite in space and also in time, although it passes through immense cycles of revolution and decline. In the post-canonical period of Pāli literature, the term *loka,dhātu* is replaced by *cakka,vāla* (Skt *cakra,vāla*), and more elaborate details are added to the traditional accounts.” (*Dictionary of Buddhism*, 2003).

<sup>689</sup> “Leagues” (*yojana*). A *yojana* is the yoke of an Indian plough (J 6:38, 42). As distance, it is as far as can be covered by a yoke of oxen, ie, about 11.25 km or 7 mi (DhA 1:108, 2:13). Thus, “twelve yojanas” is about 130 km = 84 mi.

<sup>690</sup> In **Sama,citta Vagga** of the Aṅguttara, the Buddha tells Sāriputta that “ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty devas” could comfortably stand on the end of a hair (A 2:65, qu at DA 2:579). Cf A 3:402; SA 1:74. “It is most curious to find this exact analogy to the notorious discussion as to how many angels could stand on the point of a needle in a commentary written at just that period of Buddhist history that corresponds to the Middle Ages of Christendom.” (D:RD 2:151n). The actual quote is “how many angels can dance on the point of a very fine needle, without jostling one another.” Amongst the earliest to quote this were *Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation* (1638, repr 1972, 12<sup>th</sup> unnumbered p of pref) & Isaac D’Israeli (“Curiosities of Literature,” 1791).

<sup>691</sup> “Very rarely,” *kadāci karahaci*, lit “perhaps sometimes.”

Tathāgata will attain parinirvana. But this mighty monk<sup>692</sup> stands right in front of the Blessed One, obstructing the view. We will not be able to have a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata for the last time [in his last hour]!” Thus, Ānanda, the devatas are upset [murmuring in protest].”

### The devas lament<sup>693</sup>

**5.6a** “But, bhante, what kinds of devatas is the Blessed One considering?”

“There are, Ānanda, devatas who perceive earth in the sky [who assume a gross form so that they can stand in the air];<sup>694</sup> lamenting, with hair dishevelled; lamenting, with arms outstretched; [140] fallen to the ground as if their feet have been cut off,<sup>695</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

‘Too soon will the Blessed One enter parinirvana! Too soon will the Sugata [Wellfarer] enter parinirvana! Too soon will the Eye in the world<sup>696</sup> disappear!’

**5.6b** There are, Ānanda, devatas who perceive earth in earth [who assume a gross form so that they can stand on the ground];<sup>697</sup> lamenting, with hair dishevelled; lamenting, with arms outstretched; fallen to the ground as if their feet have been cut off,<sup>698</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

‘Too soon will the Blessed One enter parinirvana! Too soon will the Sugata [Wellfarer] enter parinirvana! Too soon will the Eye in the world disappear!’

But those devatas that are free from lust accept it mindfully and fully aware,

‘Impermanent are formations! Ānanda, how else could it be?’<sup>699</sup>

### No pavāranā ceremony<sup>700</sup>

**5.7** [Ānanda:] “Before, bhante, the monks who have spent their rains residence in various districts would come for a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata, and we would receive them, we would receive those esteemed<sup>701</sup> monks who have come for a darshan [seeing the Tathāgata] and wait upon them.”<sup>702</sup>

<sup>692</sup> Comy says that the devatas are unable to see through Upavāṇa because the elder’s “greatness and abundance of *teja* (‘heat, radiance, glory’),” that were a result of the fact that in a former life he was a guardian devata of the caitya of the relics of Kassapa Buddha (DA 579 f). On darshan, see **Intro (7e)** above.

<sup>693</sup> This whole section repeats in §6.11, in Anuruddha’s mouth.

<sup>694</sup> “Devatas who perceive earth in the sky,” *devatā ākāse paṭhavi, saññiniyo*. Comy: Having perceived earth, they project earth right there in the air (*ākāse paṭhaviṃ mapetvā tattha paṭhavi, saññiniyo*, DA 2:579). See n in §5.6b below. This is a difficult passage to translate: see eg Ray 1994:362, where Reginald Ray tr *paṭhavi, saññiniyo* as “of worldly mind.”

<sup>695</sup> “As if their feet have been cut off,” reading *chinnaṃ pādāṃ viya papatanti* throughout following Se. PTS has *chinna, papātāṃ papatanti* throughout (D 16.5.6/2:140, 6.10/2:157, 6.11/2:158). Cf *chinna, pādā* (J 6:301, 303).

<sup>696</sup> “**The Eye in the world**,” *cakkhum loke*. See **Intro (7f)** on “the 5 eyes.”

<sup>697</sup> They are devas like the Brahmās who are unable prop themselves up when appearing on earth. Comy (DA 2:581) mentions the (**Brahmā**) **Hatthaka** (A 3.125) that relates an incident when the devaputra Hatthaka is unable to stand in the presence of the Buddha. The Buddha instructs him to project a gross (*oḷārika*) body form so that the earth could hold him up. Similarly, **Jana, vasabha S** (D 18.17) relates the case of the Brahmā **Sanañ, kumāra**, whose form was too subtle to be perceived by the devas of the Heaven of the Thirty-three. So he had to assume a gross form so that they could see him (D 18.17/2:210).

<sup>698</sup> See n at §5.6a above.

<sup>699</sup> *Tam kut’ eitha labbhā?* Lit, “What can you get here?” As at §§.3.48, 6.11 below.

<sup>700</sup> The following section [§§5.7-9] are not found in the Tibetan Dulva account.

<sup>701</sup> “Worthy of esteemed” and “esteemed,” *mano, bhāvanīyā* or *-bhāvanīyā*, often used in apposition with *bhikkhū* (D 2:140; M 2:23, 3:36, 3:261; S 3:1, 5:369, 371; A 3:317-322 (22□), 5:185, 189; Vv 34.13/49; Miln 129); used of the Buddha, *mano, bhāvanīyaṃ buddhaṃ*, at **Sovaṇṇa, kattarika Ap** (Ap 427.1/2:389). SA comments that “those great elders such as Sāriputta and Moggallāna are called ‘worthy of esteem because the mind grows in wholesome qualities whenever they are seen’ (SA 2:249 f). See DA 3:832; MA 3:17, 266. **Bodhi** notes that “the expression is a gerundive meaning literally ‘who should be brought to mind,’ ie who are worthy of esteem” (S:B 1043 n2). **Sadda, nīti** (Dhātu, mālā), however, gives both meanings of *mano, bhāvanīya*: (1) one who is worthy of being greeted and asked after his health; (2) one who develops his mind (Sadd:Be 330).

<sup>702</sup> Here Ānanda is referring to the most common event after Invitation, that ends the rains residence on the following dawn, when the monks would leave their rains residence and if the Buddha was nearby, visit him. Interestingly, no Invitation ceremony is mentioned in Mahā Parinibbāna S. See §3.51n on the Invitation.

## The four holy places

**5.8a** <sup>703</sup> Ānanda, there are these four places that should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega [a sense of urgency]. <sup>704</sup> What are the four? <sup>705</sup>

### The 4 Holy Places



← Lumbinī  
Bodhgayā →  
Sarnath ↓  
↓ Kusinārā



(1) Thinking, “**Here the Tathāgata was born,**” Ānanda, the place should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega [a sense of urgency].

(2) Thinking, “**Here the Tathāgata attained supreme awakening,**” Ānanda, the place should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega [a sense of urgency].

(3) Thinking, “**Here the Tathāgata turned the Wheel of the Dharma,**” Ānanda, the place should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega [a sense of urgency].

(4) Thinking, “**Here the Tathāgata attained the remainderless nirvana-element,**” Ānanda, the place should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega [a sense of urgency]. [141]

Ānanda, these are the four places that should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega [a sense of urgency].

**5.8b** Ānanda, the faithful monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, too, may visit those places, thinking, “**Here the Tathāgata was born,**” thinking, “**Here the Tathāgata attained supreme awakening,**”

<sup>703</sup> This § [5.8] as at **Samvega S** (A 4.118/2:120), addressed to “monks.”

<sup>704</sup> *Cattār’ imāni Ānanda saddhassa kula, puttassa dassanīyāni samvejanīyāni thānāni.* On samvega, see **Intro (7f)** above.

<sup>705</sup> The following are **the four holy places** “that arouse samvega [spiritual urgency]” (*samvejanīya-ṭ, thāna/samvejanīya, sthāna*) that are worthy of pilgrimage are: Lumbinī (modern Rummindei, Nepal), Uruvela/Uruvilvā (Buddha Gayā), Isipatana/Rṣipatana (modern Sarnath) and Kusinārā/Kuśinagarī. In the account of the 8 causes of earth-tremors (D 2:107-109) [§§3.11-20], causes 4, 5, 6, and 8 are respectively those in connection with the events of the four holy places [§§3.16, 17, 18, 20], that is, (4) Lumbinī (J 1:52), (5) Buddha.gayā (J 1:76), (7) Isi.patana (V 1:10), and (8) Kusinārā (D 2:137). Faxian records that there was a great pagoda at each of these four sites, that is, about the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE (Giles tr, 1923:56). On pilgrimage, see Intro (7g).



thinking, “Here the Tathāgata turned the Wheel of the Dharma,”

thinking, “Here the Tathāgata attained the remainderless nirvana-element.”<sup>706</sup>

**5.8c** Anyone who dies with a calm and bright heart of faith<sup>707</sup> while making a pilgrimage of these shrines,<sup>708</sup> at the breaking up of the body after death, is reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world.

## Women

**5.9**<sup>709</sup> “Bhante, how are we to conduct ourselves towards women?”

“By not looking at them, Ānanda.”

“But if we see them, bhante, how should we behave?”

“By not speaking to them, Ānanda.”

“But if they speak to us, bhante, how should we behave towards them?”

“Then, Ānanda, be mindful [maintain mindfulness]!”<sup>710</sup>

## Treatment of the Buddha’s remains

**5.10** “Bhante, how are we to treat the Tathāgata’s bodily remains?”<sup>711</sup>

“Do not worry yourselves about **the funeral rites** [relic worship],<sup>712</sup> Ānanda. Come now, Ānanda, you should strive for your own good, devote yourselves to your own good, and dwell with your minds tirelessly, zealously devoted to your own good.<sup>713</sup> There are wise kshatriyas, wise brahmins and wise householders who are devoted to the Tathāgata: they will take care of the funeral rites.

**5.11a**<sup>714</sup> “But how, bhante, should the Tathāgata’s bodily remains be treated?”<sup>715</sup>

<sup>706</sup> “The remainderless nirvana-element” (*anupādisesa nibbāna, dhātu*), ie the final passing away of an arhat without any remnants of the five aggregates, where all physical and mental processes truly do not further arise. See Intro (15) above.

<sup>707</sup> “With a calm and bright heart of faith,” *pasanna, citta*, alt tr “with a clear mind of faith.” On *pasanna, citta*, see Intro (7h).

<sup>708</sup> “While making a pilgrimage of these shrines,” *cetiya, carikam āhiṇḍantā*, lit “while wandering on a walking-tour of these shrines.” “**Shrines**,” *cetiya*. We have here what some would regard as the basis for **stupa worship**: see **Intro (7c)** for the nature of stupa worship & **(7h)** for its benefits. Cf **Vatthūpama S** (M 7.20/1:39) = SD 28.12: see Intro (7h).

<sup>709</sup> This episode is apparently an arbitrary and incongruous interpolation in the otherwise smooth narrative flow of the sutta. The Skt & Tibetan versions do not have this episode, attesting to its lateness. On a more positive note regarding women, see **(Piṇḍola) Bhāradvāja S** (S 35.127 = 4:110 f) = SD 27.6a.

<sup>710</sup> *Sati Ānanda upaṭṭhāpetabbā ti*, lit “Mindfulness, Ānanda, should be set up.” On mental training to deal with sexuality, see **Saññoga S** (A 7.48/4:57-59): sense-desire is not in the attractions out there but within ourselves; **Koṭṭhita S** (S 35.232/ 4:162-165): lustful desire is not in any of the six senses, but in how we engage them. The Central Asian version (Waldschmidt) omits this episode, but it is found in DĀ (T1.1), EĀ, and T1.7 versions. See Bareau 1971:34 f; Matsumura 1988 chart IV. On ordination of nuns, see Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 2000: 383-391. On position of women in early Buddhism, see Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004: 9.5-6 & SD 1.9: “Nuns before Mahā Pajāpati?” (2003).

<sup>711</sup> *Katham mayam bhante Tathāgatassa sarīre patipajjāmā ti*. “Bodily remains,” *sarīre*, neut acc pl: see §5.11a n. “The ‘we’ here would appear to refer to some, if not all, of the Buddha’s fellow renunciants” (Trainor 1997:52 f). Cf Ānanda’s next question which is more impersonal [§5.11 & n]. On defs of *sarīra*, see **Intro (7d)** above.

<sup>712</sup> “Funeral rites,” *sarīra, pūja*, lit “worship of the bodily remains.” The Buddha here is indirectly reminding Ānanda of the need of his own spiritual cultivation (ie to gain arhathood since he is still a streamwinner). However, the general tone of the Buddha’s reply, as is clear from the next sentence, is that all monastics should not be concerned with such rituals. See **Intro (7a)**.

<sup>713</sup> “Your own good,” *sad-atthe*. Be *sār’atthe*, “the essence of good; the essential goal” Ānanda is still only a streamwinner, and the Buddha is here urging him to work towards arhathood, ie the “highest good” (*uttam’atthe arahatte ghaṭetha*) (DA 2:583).

<sup>714</sup> This § [11] as at §6.17 (D 2:161) below where the Mallas ask for instructions from Ānanda regarding how to treat the Buddha’s remains.

<sup>715</sup> *Katham pana bhante Tathāgatassa sarīre patipajjitabban ti*. “Bodily remains,” *sarīre*, neut acc pl: see §5.10 n. Note that *mayam* (we) has been omitted here and the question is impersonal (“an unspecified agent,” Trainor 1997:



“Ānanda, treat the Tathāgata’s bodily remains like those of a wheel-turning king’s.”<sup>716</sup>

**5.11b** “But how, bhante, are the bodily remains of a world-turning king to be treated?”

“Ānanda, the body<sup>717</sup> should be wrapped alternately with new unbleached cotton cloth and then with a layer of teased cotton.<sup>718</sup> [142] It should be done in this manner to the length of 500 yugas [plough-lengths],<sup>719</sup> and then the body is placed in an oil-vat of iron.<sup>720</sup> This should be covered with an iron lid. The pyre should comprise totally of fragrant material, and then cremate the body. Then a **stupa** [cairn or burial mound] should be built for the wheel-turning king at the crossroads [where four highways meet].<sup>721</sup>

**5.11c** Ānanda, just as one treats the remains of a wheel-turning king, even so, one should treat the remains of the Tathāgata. Then a stupa [cairn or burial mound] should be built for the Tathāgata at the crossroads [where four highways meet].<sup>722</sup> And they who offer a garland, scent, or perfume powder, or bow down there, or brighten their minds with faith there, it will be for their profit and welfare for a long time to come.

### Those worthy of a stupa

**5.12**<sup>723</sup> Ānanda, there are these four who are worthy of a stupa.<sup>724</sup> Who are the four?

The Tathāgata, the arhat [worthy one], the fully self-awakened one is worthy of a stupa.

A pratyeka Buddha is worthy of a stupa.

A disciple [saint] of the Tathāgata is worthy of a stupa.

A wheel-turning king is worthy of a stupa.

(1) And because of what reason, Ānanda, is the Tathāgata, the arhat [worthy one], the fully self-awakened one, worthy of a stupa?

53). Comy says that Ānanda asks this question because he knew that the kshatriyas, brahmins and house lords would ask him what to do (DA 583); and in fact they did [§6.17].

<sup>716</sup> On the wheel-turning king, see §5.18 below.

<sup>717</sup> “Body,” *sarīraṃ*, here neut nom sg. See §6.23.

<sup>718</sup> *Ahatena vatthena veṭhetvā vihatena kappāsena veṭhenti* (D 16.5.11/2:141). See Intro (7a).

<sup>719</sup> *Etena upāyena pañcahi yuga,satehi* (D 16.5.11/2:142). A yuga is about 1.8 m (5.9 ft), and 500 yugas would be 900 m (984 yd). See §6.13b above & Intro (7a). Apparently, all the better known English trs (Rhys Davids, Walshe, Vajirā & Story, and Thanissaro) overlooked or mistranslated *yuga*. See §6.13 below.

<sup>720</sup> “Iron,” *ayasa*, vl *āyasa*. In Skt, it means “gold,” so glossed by Comy (DA 2:583). However, it is only here that *ayasa* is rendered as “gold.” This could be because, due to the popularity of Sanskrit in his times (5<sup>th</sup> cent), Buddhaghosa was influenced by it. As regards the dimension of the iron vat, understandably, the final size of the remains wrapped in alternate layers of cotton cloth and teased cotton should fit this iron vat and then closed with its lid. See J S Strong 2004:109 f.

<sup>721</sup> *Cātum,mahā,pathe rañño cakkavattissa thūpaṃ karonti*. **Note that neither *sarīraṃ* nor *sarīre* is mentioned:** see foll n. The ref to crossroads [“where four highroads meet?”] (*cātum,mahā,pathe*) has at least two levels of meaning. The first meaning has been discussed by RA Gunatilaka in “Ancient Stūpa Architecture: The significance of cardinal points and the cātummahāpatha concept” (1975:34-48), where the allusion is to the universal hegemony of the *cakkavati* or wheel-turning king. Here “where the four highroads meet” refers to the city centre where the highways converge; as such, this is the city’s most prominent spot. In the Dharma sense, the Buddha is a “wheel-turner” but the wheel is the *Dharma,cakra* (*dhamma,cakka*), the wheel of truth, and not the *ājñā,cakra* (*añā,cakka*), the wheel of power. The second meaning is more common in the suttas. In **Dhamma,ceṭiya S** (M 89), for example, the rajah Pasenadī praises the Buddha regarding how the Sangha members are so well disciplined “with neither rod nor sword” (M 89.13/2:122). In **Aṅgulimāla S** (M 86), the rajah again makes the same praise in reference to how the Buddha has tamed the bloodthirsty bandit, Aṅgulimāla, “with neither rod [fear] nor sword [force]” (M 86.14a/2:102). This is an example of the difference between the “wheel of power” (*añā,cakka*), ie the sphere of political power, and the “wheel of truth” (*dhamma,cakka*), the realm of the Dharma (VA 10 = KhA 1:95; MA 2:278; ThaA 3:48).

<sup>722</sup> *Cātum,mahā,pathe Tathāgatassa thūpaṃ karonti*. **Note again that here too neither *sarīraṃ* nor *sarīre* is mentioned,** in other words, no relics are mentioned as interred in such a stupa: see prev n. In the Tibetan Dulva account, this episode comes after the Upavāṇa episode (after the Mahā Sudassana story), and where it says that the *cakka,-vatti*’s pyre should be put out with milk, and only a Buddha and a *cakkavatti* are worthy of a stupa (Rockhill 1884: 137).

<sup>723</sup> This §12 as at **Thūpāraha S** (A 4.245/2:245 f).

<sup>724</sup> On the stupa, see **Intro (7c)** above.

Because, Ānanda, at the thought,

‘This is the stupa of the Tathāgata, the arhat [worthy one], the fully self-awakened one, the heart of the many brightens with faith, and then, at the breaking up of the body after death, are reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world. For this reason, Ānanda, the Tathāgata, the arhat [worthy one], the fully self-awakened one, is worthy of a stupa.

(2) And for what reason, Ānanda, is a pratyeka Buddha worthy of a stupa?

Because, Ānanda, at the thought,

‘This is the stupa of a Pratyeka Buddha,<sup>725</sup> the heart of the many brightens with faith, and then, at the breaking up of the body after death, are reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world. For this reason, Ānanda, a Pratyeka Buddha is worthy of a stupa.

(3) And for what reason, Ānanda, is a disciple [saint] of the Tathagata worthy of a stupa?

Because, Ānanda, at the thought,

‘This is the stupa of a disciple [saint] of the Tathāgata,’ the heart of the many brightens with faith, and then, at the breaking up of the body after death, are reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world. For this reason, Ānanda, a disciple [saint] of the Tathāgata is worthy of a stupa.

(4) And for what reason, Ānanda, is a wheel-turning monarch [just world ruler]<sup>726</sup> worthy of a stupa?

Because, Ānanda, at the thought,

‘This is the stupa of a wheel-turning king,’ the hearts of the many brighten with faith, and then, at the breaking up of the body after death, they are reborn in a happy state, a heavenly world. For this reason, Ānanda, a wheel-turning monarch is worthy of a stupa.

These, Ānanda, are the four who are worthy of a stupa.”<sup>727</sup>

## ĀNANDA

### Ānanda’s grief

**5.13**<sup>728</sup> Then the venerable Ānanda went into the monks’ lodging [vihara]<sup>729</sup> and stood lamenting, leaning against the door-bolt, weeping:<sup>730</sup>

“Alas! I am still a learner<sup>731</sup> with much more to do! And the Teacher is attaining parinirvana—**he who is so kind to me!**”

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks,

<sup>725</sup> **Pratyeka Buddha, pacceka, buddha.** A “solitary” or “hermit” Buddha, who usually remains in seclusion and does not teach the Dharma to others. The wisdom of the fully self-awakened one (*sammā, sambuddha*) is far greater than that of the Pratyeka Buddha, who usually arise during a time when there is no fully self-awakened one.

<sup>726</sup> On the “wheel-turning monarch” (*cakkavatti*), see SJ Tambiah, “The Buddhist conception of universal king and its manifestations in south and southeast Asia,” 1987.

<sup>727</sup> While stupas could and had been built for the Buddha and his saint disciples (from archaeological finds), it is difficult to imagine building stupas for pratyeka Buddhas and a wheel-turning king. The former only appear when there are no fully self-awakened Buddhas, in which case it would be difficult (though not impossible) to recognize them then. As for wheel-turning kings, it is almost impossible to find one in real life. Clearly this is a late interpolation. It is useful here to reflect on the Buddha’s stanzas to Sundarika Bhāradvāja (**Vatthūpama S, M 7.20/1:39**): see Intro (7h) above.

<sup>728</sup> Winternitz (1939:9) says that these 2 sections [§5.13 f] are amongst those that “bear the stamp of the greatest antiquity.” See also §§2.23 & 2.25.

<sup>729</sup> Although *vihāra* may be an abstract n referring to a way of dwelling, here it refers to a physical residence, eg, a hut or cottage. As the scene here is in the Upavattana sal grove, it “would seem to point to the fact that this episode originally stood in some other connexion” (D:RD 2:157 n2). Buddhaghosa explains that *vihāra* here refers to a *maṇḍala, māla* (DA 2:584), ie, “a circular house or hall with a peaked roof, a pavilion” (DPL), where the clan performs its communal ceremonies. See foll n, where it is said to be a “garden shed” (*uyyāna, ovaraka*, J 307/3:23).

<sup>730</sup> The Buddha, it is said, tells **Palāsa J** (J 307), in this connection with Ānanda’s grieving at “the door-bolt of the garden shed” (*uyyāna, ovarake kapi, sīsām*). The story is about how a poor brahmin faithfully worships a tree-deity, who reward him by presenting him with hidden treasure.<sup>730</sup> The moral of the story is clearly alludes to Ānanda’s devotion to the Buddha.

<sup>731</sup> “Learner” (*sekha*), ie a saint who has not attained the arhat-path (ie one is a streamwinner, a once-returner, or a non-returner). Ānanda is still a streamwinner. See the conditions of non-decline at §1.7(7).

“Where, bhikshus, is Ānanda?”

“Bhante, the venerable Ānanda is in the monks’ lodging [vihara], standing lamenting, leaning against the door-post, weeping.”

Then the Blessed One addressed a certain monk:

“Go, monk, and call Ānanda in my name, saying:<sup>732</sup>

‘Avuso,<sup>733</sup> the Teacher calls you.’” [144]

“Yes, bhante,” the monk replied in assent to the Blessed One. He approached the venerable Ānanda and then said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Avuso, the Teacher calls you.”

“Yes, avuso,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the monk.

The venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, and having saluted him, sat down at one side.

### The Buddha consoles Ānanda

**5.14** Seated thus at one side, the Blessed One said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Enough, Ānanda, do not grieve! Do not weep! Have I not told you before: ‘All those things that are dear and pleasant to us must suffer difference, separation and change [becoming other]’?<sup>734</sup> What else do you expect? Whatever is born, become, formed [compounded], is liable to decay—that it should not decay is impossible.<sup>735</sup>

For a long time, Ānanda, you have been in the Tathāgata’s presence ever ready to serve,<sup>736</sup> showing lovingkindness through bodily deeds, helpfully, happily, forthrightly and unstintingly, through verbal deeds, helpfully, happily, forthrightly and unstintingly, and through mental deeds, helpfully, happily, forthrightly and unstintingly.<sup>737</sup>

You have gained much merit, Ānanda. Keep up your effort and you will swiftly be free from the mental influxes.<sup>738</sup>

### Valediction to Ānanda<sup>739</sup>

**5.15**<sup>740</sup> Then the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Bhikshus, all those who were arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones in the past have had no better attendants, that is to say, just like Ānanda. So too will those arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones to come will have no better attendants, that is to say, just like Ānanda.<sup>741</sup>

<sup>732</sup> *Ehi tvaṃ bhikkhu mama vacanena Ānandaṃ amantehi*, lit “Go you, monk, address Ānanda with my word.”

<sup>733</sup> *Āvuso*: see §6.2 n.

<sup>734</sup> This famous sentence is stock: D 2:118=114=158=163; **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 2:192=194); **Cunda S** (S 5:163); Nm 1:123 qu D 16.5.14/2:144. Cf **Abhiṅga, paccavekhittaba S** (A 3:74).

<sup>735</sup> This nested quote is stock: D 16.3.48/2:118=16.5.14/144=16.6.11a/158=16.6.20/163.

<sup>736</sup> “In the Tathāgata’s presence ever ready to serve,” *Tathāgato paccupaṭṭhito*. Ānanda has served the Buddha for 25 years at this point. See Tha 1041-1043.

<sup>737</sup> “Helpfully, happily, forthrightly and unstintingly,” *hitena sukkena advayena appamāṇena*.

<sup>738</sup> It is interesting to note that in **Upatissa S** (S 21.2), Sāriputta actually hints to Ānanda regarding the passing away of the Buddha:

Avuso, even if the Teacher himself were to undergo change and become other, still sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair would not arise in me. However, it would occur to me: “The Teacher, so influential, so powerful, so mighty, has passed away. But if the Blessed One had lived for a long time, that would have been for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of devas and humans!” (S 21.2/2:274)

<sup>739</sup> The next 3 sections [§§5.15-17] are not found in the Tibetan Dulva version.

<sup>740</sup> The 2 parts of this section (D 16.5.15-16/2:144 f) are found separately in (**Ānanda**) **Achariya S 3** (A 4.129/2:132) on Ānanda’s charisma & (**Ānanda**) **Achariya S 4** (A 4.130/2:133) on the charisma of the wheel-turning king. Cf teachings on spiritual friendship at S 5:16.

<sup>741</sup> In other words, Ānanda is the ideal Buddha attendant. The Buddha’s loving but ironic humour is evident here. There is only one Gotama Buddha and only one Ānanda, and as such, he we are not going to see another on with the likes of him.

Bhikshus, Ānanda is wise.<sup>742</sup> He knows,  
 ‘This is the right time for the monks to come for a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata’;  
 ‘This is the right time for the nuns to come for a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata’;  
 ‘This is the right time for the men lay-followers to come for a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata’; [145]  
 ‘This is the right time for the women lay-followers to come for a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata’;  
 ‘This is the right time for the kings, the ministers, the outside teachers, the disciples of outside teachers, to come for a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata.’

### Ānanda’s charisma

**5.16**<sup>743</sup> Ānanda, bhikshus, has **these four wonderful and marvellous qualities**. What are the four?<sup>744</sup>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) If an assembly of <u>monks</u> comes to see Ānanda,<br>and if Ānanda <i>talks</i> on the Dharma to an assembly of monks,<br>but when Ānanda is <i>silent</i> ,                                | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased with the talk;<br>they are disappointed. |
| (2) If an assembly of <u>nuns</u> comes to see Ānanda,<br>and if Ānanda <i>talks</i> on the Dharma to an assembly of nuns,<br>but when Ānanda is <i>silent</i> ,                                  | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased with the talk;<br>they are disappointed. |
| (3) If an assembly of <u>men lay-followers</u> comes to see Ānanda,<br>and if Ānanda <i>talks</i> on the Dharma to an assembly of men<br>lay-followers,<br>but when Ānanda is <i>silent</i> ,     | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased with the talk;<br>they are disappointed. |
| (4) If an assembly of <u>women lay-followers</u> comes to see Ānanda,<br>and if Ānanda <i>talks</i> on the Dharma to an assembly of women<br>lay-followers,<br>but when Ānanda is <i>silent</i> , | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased with the talk;<br>they are disappointed. |

These four wonderful and marvellous qualities, bhikshus, are those of **a wheel-turning king** [a just world ruler]:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) If a company of <u>kshatriyas</u> visits a wheel-turning king,<br>and if the wheel-turning king <i>talks</i> ,<br>but when the wheel-turning king is <i>silent</i> , | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased at the talk;<br>they are disappointed.       |
| (2) If a company of <u>brahmins</u> visits a wheel-turning king,<br>and if the wheel-turning king <i>talks</i> ,<br>but when the wheel-turning king is <i>silent</i> ,   | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased at the talk;<br>they are disappointed.       |
| (3) If a company of <u>households</u> visits a wheel-turning king,<br>and if the wheel-turning king <i>talks</i> ,<br>but when the wheel-turning king is <i>silent</i> , | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased at the talk;<br>they are disappointed.       |
| (4) If a company of <u>recluses</u> visits a wheel-turning king,<br>and if the wheel-turning king <i>talks</i> ,<br>but when the wheel-turning king is <i>silent</i> ,   | they are pleased at the sight of him;<br>they are pleased at the talk;<br>they are disappointed. [146] |

Even so, bhikshus, these four wonderful and marvellous qualities are found in Ānanda:

*If any of the fourfold companies comes to see Ānanda, it would be pleased to see him, it would be pleased when he talks on Dharma, but would be disappointed if he is silent.*

Bhikshus, these are four wonderful and marvellous qualities found in Ānanda.<sup>745</sup>

<sup>742</sup> Although Ānanda is here stated as being wise in public relations and protocol, he is also the foremost amongst monks who are learned (*bahussuta*) (A 1:24). See eg (**Ānanda**) **Adhamma S** (A 10.115/5:225-229). On Ānanda’s wisdom, see also SA 2:94 f.

<sup>743</sup> This [§5.16] is found in **Abbhuta Dhamma S 3** (A 4.129/2:132); but not found in the Tibetan Dulva.

<sup>744</sup> It is highly probable that Ānanda is declared the foremost amongst monks who are *gatimantānañ* in this connection (A 1:25). As such, we can tr *gatimanta* or *gatimā* is “one who knows the course of things,” ie perspicacious in protocol: cf AA 1:287. Comys, however, generally gloss *gatima* as “possessed of understanding”: “Accomplished in peerless understanding,” *gatimanto ’ti asadisāya nāṇa, gatiyā samannāgato* (ThaA 3:121,9); “wise, meaning with wisdom, accomplished in understanding,” *pañḍitā ’ti pañḍiccena samannāgātā gatimantā* (VA 552,24). See DP sv



## KUSINĀRĀ AND THE MALLAS

Kusinārā

**5.17** <sup>746</sup>Then the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:<sup>747</sup>

“Bhante, please do not pass into parinirvana in this little township, a barren little township, a jungle outpost.

There are, bhante, other great cities, that is to say, Campā, Rājagaha, Sāvattihī, Sāketa, Kosambī, Benares. Pass into parinirvana there, bhante; there are many wealthy kshatriyas there, many wealthy brahmins there, many wealthy householders there who are great in faith in the Tathāgātā. They would perform the funeral rites of the Tathāgata.”

“Say not so, Ānanda! Say not so, Ānanda, that **Kusinārā** is a little township, a barren little township, a jungle outpost.

**5.18** MAHĀ SUDASSANA & KUSĀ, VĀTĪ.<sup>748</sup> Once upon a time, Ānanda, there was a rajah named **Mahā Sudassana**, a wheel-turning king, a just rightful king, conqueror of the four quarters, who brought stability to the country,<sup>749</sup> who was endowed with the seven jewels [treasures].<sup>750</sup> This **Kusinārā**, Ānanda, was the rajah Mahā Sudassana’s royal city named **Kusā, vatī**: it was<sup>751</sup> 12 yojanas long<sup>752</sup> from the east to the west and 7 yojanas wide<sup>753</sup> from the north to the south.<sup>754</sup>

And, Ānanda, the royal city of Kusāvati was wealthy and prosperous, [147] with a large population, crowded with humans and replete with food. Ānanda, it is like the celestial city of the devas called **Āḷakamandā**,<sup>755</sup> wealthy and prosperous, with a large population, crowded with yakshas and replete with food. Even so, Ānanda, was the royal city of Kusāvati wealthy and prosperous, with a large population, crowded with humans and replete with food.

<sup>745</sup> As at (**Cakka, vatti**) **Abbhuta Dhamma S** (A 4.130), but the two sections are reversed, with the wheel-turner being mentioned first (A 4.130/2:133) = SD 36.10(2.1). Very likely it is such passages [§§5.15-16] that constitutes “marvels” (*abbhuta, dhamma*), rather than miraculous stories: see eg **Abbhuta Dhamma Ss** mentioned in the §§ nn. It is possible to incl lion-roars (*sīha, nāda*) here, too: see SD 36.10 Intro (3). See also Ency Bsm: Aṅga (under *abbhutadhamma*).

<sup>746</sup> The foll 2 §§ [5.17-18] are as at **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17.1.1-3/2:169 f), where the §§ are expanded on. This episode is not found in the Tibetan Dulva version.

<sup>747</sup> This incident of Ānanda’s remark regarding **Kusinārā** is recounted in the Intro to **Mahā Sudassana S** (M 17.1-3/2:169 f) & **Mahā Sudassana J** (J 95/1:391). See also **Gomaya S** (S 22.96), where Mahā Sudassana is referred to as a “head-anointed kshatriya rajah” (*rājā...khattiyo muddhāvasitto*) (S 22.96/3:144).

<sup>748</sup> The Udāna Comy gives 3 reasons why the Buddha chooses to pass away in Kusi, nārā, ie (1) it would be the occasion for teaching **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17) = SD 36.12; (2) the wanderer’s Subhadda’s conversion, and (3) the brahmin Doṇa would fairly distribute his relics, thus preventing a bloodshed (UA 402). See (**Pāda**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2:37 f) = SD 36.13 (2).

<sup>749</sup> *Janapada-t, thāvriya-p, patto*, see DA 1:250, 2:443; MA 3:365; SA 1:167; SnA 2:449.

<sup>750</sup> On the 7 jewels (*satta ratanā*) of the wheel-turning king—the wheel jewel, the elephant jewel, the horse jewel, the gem-jewel, the woman-jewel, the householder jewel, the commander jewel—see **Bāla, paṇḍita S** (M 129.33-41/-3:172-176) = SD 2.22 (2003).

<sup>751</sup> The rest of the sentence: *Puratthimena ca pacchimena ca dvādasa yojanāni, āyāmena uttarena ca dakkhiṇena ca satta yojanāni vitthārena*.

<sup>752</sup> About 135 km (84 mi) long.

<sup>753</sup> About 79 km (49 mi) wide.

<sup>754</sup> As a whole, 24 yojanas (about 135 km) long in latitude and 14 yojanas (79 km) wide in longitude. *Raṅṅo Ānanda Mahā, sudassanassa ayaṃ Kusinārā Kusāvati nāma rājadhāni ahoṣi, puratthimena ca pacchimena ca dvādasa yojanāni āyāmena, uttarena ca dakkhiṇena ca satta yojanāni vitthārena*.

<sup>755</sup> **Āḷakamandā** was the royal city of Kuvera, the king of Uttara, kuru, the northern continent (D 3:201). It is possible that this was an allusion to Alexandria, of which there were at least 11 ancient cities founded by Alexander the Great in the course of his campaigns (334-323 BCE). Alexandria on the Indus, founded in 325 near the confluence of the Indus river with the Hydaspes, Acesines and Hyphasis rivers, perhaps identifiable with Uch, in Bahāwalpur (Pakistan). Alexandria in Gedrosia, founded in 325: the modern Bela, in Pakistan. Both of these cities were to the “north” of the Gangetic plain. If this allusion were made, than this portion of the sutta was added just before or during Asoka’s reign (c 265-238 BCE or c 273-232). Cf **Cakka, vatti Sīha, nāda S** (D 26) prediction of India and Ketu, -maṭi in the distant future (D 26.23/3:76).

And Ānanda, the royal city of Kusāvati, night and day would resound with ten sounds, that is to say, elephant sound, horse sound, chariot sound, drum sound, mirutangkam [barrel drum]<sup>756</sup> sound, vīna<sup>757</sup> sound, the sound of singing, cymbal sound, gong sound, and the sound of ‘Enjoy! Drink! Eat!’ [‘Eat, drink and be merry!’]. These are the ten sounds.<sup>758</sup>

### The Mallas of Kusinārā

**5.19**<sup>759</sup> Go, Ānanda, into Kusinārā and announce to the Mallas of Kusinārā, thus:

‘Vāsetṭhas,<sup>760</sup> the parinirvana of the Tathāgata will occur during the last watch tonight. Come out, Vāsetṭhas! Come out, Vāsetṭhas!<sup>761</sup> Regret not later,<sup>762</sup> saying,

“The parinirvana of the Tathāgata occurred within the confines of our own village, but we did not have a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata for the last time!””

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One, and having dressed himself, carrying his robe and bowl, entered Kusinārā with a companion.

**5.20** Now at that time, the Mallas of Kusinārā were gathered in their assembly hall attending to some business. Then the venerable Ānanda went to the assembly hall of the Mallas of Kusinārā, and announced to them thus:

“Vāsetṭhas, the parinirvana of the Tathāgata will occur during the last watch tonight. Come out, Vāsetṭhas! Come out, Vāsetṭhas! Regret not later, saying,

“The parinirvana of the Tathāgata occurred within the confines of our own village, [148] but we did not have a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata for the last time!””

### Lamentations of the Mallas

**5.21** Then when they had heard the venerable Ānanda, the Mallas, the sons of the Mallas, the daughters-in-law of the Mallas, and the wives of the Mallas were grieved and saddened, afflicted at heart, and some of them lamented, with hair dishevelled; they lamented, with arms outstretched; they fell to the ground as if their feet had been cut off,<sup>763</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

<sup>756</sup> “Mirutangkam,” *mudiṅga*, v1 *mutiṅga* (Skt *mṛdaṅga*, lit “body of clay”), a double-headed Indian barrel drum, the modern *mridanga*. As at **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 1.2.90/2:79), where *bheri...mutiṅga* are mentioned. A *mṛdaṅga* is a barrel-shaped drum played horizontally with the hands beating both ends. Comy says that the drum, made from the claw of a giant crab, made a sound that could be heard for 12 leagues (135 km) around to summon the people to assemble on festival days (SA 2:228). The *mridangas* have stretched skin with a central circle of black paste that gives a different playing surface. In north India, it is called *pakhwaj*. The *mridangam* is today used in most Carnatic (south of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh) concerts as accompaniment to both vocal and instrumental performances. Also called *saṅgīta maddalam*, it is believed to be the oldest of all percussion instruments. A *bheri* is a small conical drum. See **Āṇi S** (S 20.7/ 2:266 f) = SD 7.7 for n & picture.

<sup>757</sup> “Vīna,” *vīnā*, Hindi “bīn,” a family of Indian stringed instruments, basically stick zither, having a narrow neck, neckless, non-resonating body with strings running the entire length. Vīnas, usually 7-stringed and fretted, appear in many sizes and shapes. The classical vīna of northern Indian (Hindustani) music, a difficult solo instrument, has a large resonating gourd under each end of body and high, movable frets. Vīna may also refer generically to stringed instruments. Before about 1000, it may have referred to an arched harp. (Ency Brit 15<sup>th</sup> ed)

<sup>758</sup> In the Tibetan Dulva account, the Upavāṇa episode is inserted here (Rockhill 1884:136 f) where Upavāṇa’s former life is recounted (f 608-609).

<sup>759</sup> The following sections [§§5.19-26]—the impending parinirvana announced to the Mallas & Subhadda’s visit—are unique to this Sutta.

<sup>760</sup> Vāsetṭha (Skt Vāsiṣṭha). This was the gotra (*gotta*) or clan name of the Mallas of Kusinārā and of Pāvā. The clan was held in high esteem (V 4:8). The clan probably traced its descent to the sage Vāsiṣṭha (V 1:245; D 1:104; M 2:164, 200).

<sup>761</sup> “Come out... come out!” *abhikkamatha...abhikkamatha* (PTS *abhikkhamatha* is wr), or “approach... approach!”; also tr as “advance... advance!” This is stock phrase for summoning someone: *abhikkama* (imper 2<sup>nd</sup> sg): V 2:156; D 1:50, 3:17; M 3:133; S 1:211; Nm 1:172; *abhikkamatha* (imper 2<sup>nd</sup> pl) (V 1:351; D 2:147, 3:16; M 1:205).

<sup>762</sup> *Mā pacchā vippaṭisārino ahuvattha*, also occurs at §§5.20 & §6.5 x3 (the Buddha’s last words) = **Kusinārā S** (A 4.76/2:79 f); **Devatā S** (A 9.19/4:392). For comy, see MA 1:195 f, SA 3:111 f, 266 f.

<sup>763</sup> “As if their feet have been cut off,” reading *chinnaṃ pādāṃ viya papatanti* throughout following Se. PTS has *chinna,papātam papatanti* throughout (D 16.5.6/2:140, 6.10/2:157, 6.11/2:158). Cf *chinna,pādā* (J 6:301, 303).

“Too soon will the Blessed One enter parinirvana! Too soon will the Sugata [Wellfarer] enter parinirvana! Too soon will the Eye in the world disappear!”

Then the Mallas, the sons of the Mallas, the daughters-in-law of the Mallas, and the wives of the Mallas, grieving and saddened, afflicted at heart, went to the Upavattana sal grove and approached the venerable Ānanda.

**5.22a** Then this occurred to the venerable Ānanda,

“If I were to allow the Mallas of Kusinārā to salute the Blessed One one by one, the night would have passed before they have all paid homage. What if I were to let them pay homage *family by family*, saying, ‘Bhante, the Malla named so-and-so with his children, with his wife, with his servants, with his companions, pay homage with their heads at the Blessed One’s feet.’<sup>764</sup>

**5.22b** Then the venerable Ānanda, let the Mallas of Kusinārā pay homage to the Blessed One, family by family, saying,

“Bhante, the Malla named so-and-so with his children, with his wife, with his servants, with his companions, pay homage with their heads at the Blessed One’s feet.”

And so by this means, the venerable Ānanda had the Mallas of Kusinārā pay homage to the Blessed One during the first watch.

## THE LAST CONVERT

### Subhadda the last convert

**5.23** Now at that time, a wanderer named **Subhadda**<sup>765</sup> was dwelling at Kusinārā. The wanderer Subhadda heard, “It is said that the parinirvana of the recluse Gotama will occur tonight.” [149]

Then this occurred to the wanderer Subhadda,

“Now I have heard this being said amongst teacher after teacher, mature and aged,

‘Very rarely<sup>766</sup> do the Tathāgatas, the arhats [worthy ones], the fully self-awakened ones, arise in the world.’

And the parinirvana of the recluse Gotama will occur tonight.

And there has arisen in me this doubt regarding the Dharma [truth]. Now since I have faith in the recluse Gotama, I am sure that the recluse Gotama will show me the Dharma so that I would overcome this doubt regarding the Dharma.”

**5.24a** Then the wanderer went to the Upavattana sal grove of the Mallas, approached the venerable Ānanda, and said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Now I have heard this being said amongst teacher after teacher, mature and aged,

‘Very rarely do the Tathāgatas, the arhats [worthy ones], the fully self-awakened ones, arise in the world.’

<sup>764</sup> The desire to have one’s name announced to a holy person appears to have been a part of pre-Buddhist devotional practice of seeing (*dassana*; Skt *darśana*) a holy person. Elsewhere, the stock passage reads: “Then <so and so> went up to the Blessed One. Some exchanged greetings with him; some greeted him with their palms together; some announced their name and clan before the Blessed One—and then sat down at one side. Some kept silent and sat down at one side” (D 1:151, 2:356, 3:208; M 1:229, 401; 3:291; S 5:353; A 1:181). It is customary that those well-disposed to the Buddha would announce their names when visiting him. This passage here and others in the Pali Canon indicate that it was quickly adopted by the Indian Buddhists. It continued in the Buddhist custom of having the donor’s name inscribed in bas-reliefs near or on a stupa, even in locations where the name would not be directly visible to human eyes.

<sup>765</sup> **Subhadda** was from a high-caste wealthy brahmin family (*udicca.brāhmaṇa.mahā,sālā*) (DA 2:588; cf DhA 3:376 f). It is interesting that in the past, Subhadda and Aññāta Koṇḍañña—the first saint (a streamwinner) after the Buddha (S 56.11.16/1:423), and then arhat (S 22.59.24/3:68)—were brothers (DA 2:588). According to the Tibetan Dulva, Subhadra (*Rab-bzang*) is 120 years old, greatly respected by the people of Kusinārā. After attaining arhat-hood, Subhadra performs miracles and converts the Mallas, and then passes away before the Buddha (Rockhill 1884: 138). The Sanskrit **Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra** adds an interesting detail: the Buddha, before relinquishing his life-formation, lives on long enough so that the two persons, namely, Supriya, the king of the Gandharvas, and Subhadra the wanderer, who could benefit from being taught by the Buddha himself, would gain spiritual maturity within three months. See **Intro [9e]**.

<sup>766</sup> “Very rarely,” *kadāci karahaci*, lit “perhaps sometimes.”

And the parinirvana of the recluse Gotama will occur tonight.

And there has arisen in me this doubt regarding the Dharma [truth]. Now since I have faith in the recluse Gotama, I am sure that the recluse Gotama will show me the Dharma so that I would overcome this doubt regarding the Dharma.

Master Ānanda, I would like to have a darshan [seeing] of the recluse Gotama.”

**5.24b** When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said this to the wanderer Subhadda:

“Enough,<sup>767</sup> avuso Subhadda, trouble not the Tathāgata. The Blessed One is tired.”

For the second time, the wanderer *requested*.

For the third time, the wanderer said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Now I have heard this being said amongst teacher after teacher, mature and aged,

‘Very rarely do the Tathāgatas, the arhats [worthy ones], the fully self-awakened ones, arise in the world.’

And the parinirvana of the recluse Gotama will occur tonight. **[150]**

And there has arisen in me this doubt regarding the Dharma [truth]. Now since I have faith in the recluse Gotama, I am sure that the recluse Gotama will show me the Dharma so that I would overcome this doubt regarding the Dharma.

Master Ānanda, I would like to have a darshan with the recluse Gotama.”

For the third time, too, the venerable Ānanda said this to the wanderer Subhadda:

“Enough, avuso Subhadda, trouble not the Tathāgata. The Blessed One is tired.”

### The Buddha welcomes Subhadda<sup>768</sup>

**5.25** Now the Blessed One heard the venerable Ānanda’s conversation with the wanderer Subhadda. Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Enough, Ānanda, do not hinder Subhadda. Ānanda, let Subhadda have a darshan [seeing] of the Tathāgata. Whatever Subhadda will ask me, all that is for the sake of knowledge: he wishes to ask not for the sake of vexing the Tathāgata. And whatever he will ask, I will answer so that he will quickly understand.”<sup>769</sup>

Then the venerable Ānanda said this to the wanderer Subhadda:

“Go, avuso Subhadda, the Blessed One gives you the opportunity.”

**5.26a** Then the wanderer Subhadda approached the Blessed One, and having exchanged greetings with the Blessed One, sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the wanderer Subhadda said this to the Blessed One:

“Master Gotama, there are recluses and brahmins, heads of an order, heads of a group [congregation], congregation teachers, well known and famous, ford-makers [who bring others across the river of suffering], regarded as good by the masses,<sup>770</sup> that is to say, Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesambalī, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhi,putta and Nigaṇṭha Nātha,putta.<sup>771</sup> Have they all, according to their own declaration, gained superknowledge<sup>772</sup> or have they not, **[151]** or have some gained superknowledge and some not?”

<sup>767</sup> “Enough,” *alam*, in contemporary parlance, “I’m sorry!”

<sup>768</sup> Udāna Comy says that one of the 3 reasons that the Buddha has chosen to pass away in Kusināra is because of this occasion, ie, the conversion of the wanderer Subhadda (UA 402). For the other 2 reasons, see subtitle at §5.18 n.

<sup>769</sup> *Alam Ānanda, mā Subhaddam vāresi, labhatam Ānanda Subhaddo Tathāgatam dassanāya. Yam kiñci mam Subhaddo pucchissati, sabban tam aññā,pekho ‘va pucchissati no vihesā,pekho, yañ c’assāham puṭṭho vyākariissāmi tam khippam eva ājānissatī ti.*

<sup>770</sup> “The head of an order...etc...advanced in years,” *saṅghino gaṇino gaṇ’ācariyā nāto yasassino titthakarā sādhu,sammata ca bahu,janassa*. Similar stock passage at D 2.2/1:47.

<sup>771</sup> These are the six non-Buddhist teachers (*titthiyā*) who are all recluses (*samaṇā*), ie members of the reform movement against the brahminical tradition. Summary of teachings: Pūraṇa Kassapa: antinomian ethics; Makkhali Gosāla: fatalism or determinism; Ajita Kesambalī: materialism; Pakudha Kaccāyana: atomism; Sañjaya Belaṭṭhi,-putta: agnosticism; and Nigaṇṭha Nātha,putta: the fourfold restraint. For details, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2:16-33/1:52-59) & Jaini (1970) 2001:57-61.

<sup>772</sup> “Realized direct (higher) knowledge,” *abbhaññamsu*, aor 2<sup>nd</sup> pl from *abhijānāti*.



### The presence of saints

**5.26b** “Enough, Subhadda, let this matter rest, that is to say, whether they all have, according to their own declaration, gained superknowledge or not, or whether some have gained superknowledge and some not!

I will teach you the Dharma, Subhadda. Listen to it, Subhadda, pay close attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the wanderer Subhadda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

**5.27** <sup>773</sup>“Subhadda, in whatever Dharma [Teaching] and Vinaya [Discipline], where **the noble eight-fold path** is not found,

the recluse of the first kind [streamwinner] is not found there,  
 the recluse of the second kind [once-returner] is not found there,  
 the recluse of the third kind [non-returner] is not found there,  
 the recluse of the fourth kind [arhat] is not found there.

<sup>774</sup>But, Subhadda, in whatever Dharma and Vinaya, where the noble eightfold path is found,

the recluse of the first kind [streamwinner] is found there,  
 the recluse of the second kind [once-returner] is found there,  
 the recluse of the third kind [non-returner] is found there,  
 the recluse of the fourth kind [arhat] is found there.

The other schools [false teachings] are empty of recluses, but, Subhadda, **if these monks were to live rightly here [in this teaching], this world would not be empty of arhats.** <sup>775</sup>

I was twenty-nine years of age, Subhadda,  
 when I went forth, seeking for the good.  
 Now over fifty years have passed  
 since the day that I went forth, Subhadda.  
 Outside of the realm of the right way that is the wholesome truth, <sup>776</sup>  
 there are no recluses. [152]

**5.28a** <sup>777</sup>When this was said, the wanderer Subhadda said this to the Blessed One:

“Excellent, bhante! Excellent! Bhante! Just as if, bhante, one were to place upright what had been overturned, or were to reveal what was hidden, or were to show the way to one who was lost, or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way, in numerous ways, the Dharma has been made clear by the Blessed One.

I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.

May I, bhante, receive the going-forth before the Blessed One; may I receive admission into the order.”

### Subhadda joins the order

**5.28b** <sup>778</sup>Subhadda, anyone who was previously a follower of an outside teaching and wishes to go forth in this Dharma and Vinaya, and wishes for the ordination, has to go on a probation of four

<sup>773</sup> This § [5.27] is qu at Kvu 601. On this whole section [§5.27], see Gethin 2001:260 f.

<sup>774</sup> The next two paras at M 1:63 f & A 2:138.

<sup>775</sup> This declaration should not be interpreted as a triumphalist and exclusivist statement, but merely reflecting the religious conditions of the Buddha’s time. It should be balanced with the Buddha’s declaration in **Puppha S** (S 3:-138): “I do not quarrel with the world, monks, but the world quarrels with me. One who speaks Dharma does not quarrel with anyone in the world. Of that to which the wise men of the world do not assent, I too say that it is not so. Of that to which the wise men of the world assent, I too say that it is so” (S 22.94/3:138). “Here the Buddha emphasizes that he does not reject all ontological propositions, but only those that transcend the bounds of possible experience” (S:B 1085 n185). See also Gethin 2001:261.

<sup>776</sup> “The right way that is the wholesome truth” (*ñāya kusala dhamma*): see n in (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99.4/2:197) = SD 38.6.

§ [5.28] (on the probate who is from another religion) is found at V 1:69, 71, D 1:176, M 1:391, 494, S 2:21.

months.<sup>779</sup> At the end of the four months, the monks who are satisfied<sup>780</sup> would give him the going-forth [novice initiation] and ordain him into monkhood [higher ordination].

However, I see a difference amongst individuals here.<sup>781</sup>

**5.29** “If, bhante, anyone who was previously a follower of an outside teaching and wishes to go forth in this Dharma and Vinaya, and wishes for the ordination, has to go on *a probation of four months*,... I will take that probation for four years! At the end of the four years, let the monks who are satisfied give me the going-forth [novice initiation] and ordain me into monkhood [higher ordination].”<sup>782</sup>

Then, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Then, Ānanda, let Subhadda go forth!”<sup>783</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the Blessed One.

**5.30** Then the wanderer Subhadda said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“It is a gain for you, Ānanda, a great gain, that you have been anointed here before the Teacher [by his own mouth] with the pupil’s anointing [the discipleship consecration].”<sup>784</sup> **[153]**

Then the wanderer Subhadda received the going forth and the ordination before Blessed One himself. And not long after his ordination, dwelling alone, aloof (from society), heedful, ardent, and resolute, in no long time, he reached and remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which sons of family rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing and realizing it for himself right here and now.

He directly knew: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done what had to be done, there is no more for this state of being.”

And the venerable Subhadda became one of the arhats.

He was the last direct disciple of the Blessed One.<sup>785</sup>

<sup>778</sup> This section [§§5.28b-29], as at **Kassapa Sīhanāda S** (D 8.24/1:176), **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.5.28b-29) = SD 9, **Acela Kassapa S** (S 12.17/2:18-22) = SD 18.5, & **Sabhiya S** (Sn 3.6/p102).

<sup>779</sup> This rule and procedure are found at Mv 1.38 = V 1:69; see also D 1:176; M 1:494, 512; S 2:21; Sn p101 f.

<sup>780</sup> “Satisfied,” *āradhā, citta*, ie satisfied that the probate has fulfilled all conditions as stipulated at Mahāvagga 1.38 = V 1:69 (VA 5:990; DA 2:363; MA 3:106; SA 2:37; SnA 2:436).

<sup>781</sup> *Api ca m’ettha puggala, vemattatā viditā ti. Saṅkhitta S 2* (S 48.13) explains that “the difference in individuals” (*puggala, vemattatā*) is due to one’s level in cultivating the 5 spiritual faculties (*indriya*)—faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom—“Thus, monks, due to a difference in the faculties there is a difference in the fruits; due to a difference in the fruits, there is a difference among individuals” (S 48.13/5:200). In other words, the Buddha takes exception of him, as he did in the case of the fire-worshipping matter hair ascetics (the 3 **Kassapa brothers**) (V 1:34 f; J 1:82, 4:180) and **Acela Kassapa** (D 8.24/2:176 f); see SnA 2:436. The wanderer **Sabhiya**, however, had to observe the 4-month probation (Sn 3.6/p102). The Buddha knows whether a non-Buddhist convert needs probation or not (DA 2:362), and Subhadda does not, apparently because his 5 spiritual faculties are well developed. Comy says that after the Buddha has granted Subhadda permission to join the order, Ānanda takes him aside, pours water over his head, teaches him the “meditation with skin as fifth” (*taca, pañcaka kammaṭṭhāna*), then shaves off his hair and beard, clads him in the saffron robes, and then administers to him the three refuges. Then he leads him back to the Buddha who gives him a meditation subject. Subhadda immediately goes into solitary practice, walking in meditation and wins arhathood that same night, and comes down to sit beside the Buddha (DA 2:590). Subhadda’s ordination is said to be the Buddha’s last act before his parinirvana (KhA 89). For the case of **Seniya**, the dog ascetic, see **Kukkura, vatika S** (M 57.14-15/3:391) = SD 23.11.

<sup>782</sup> Subhadda’s reply here is the same as that of Acela Kassapa, as in the Buddha’s following reply (D 8.24/ 2:176 f). However, Subhadda’s case is unique in that he wins arhathood on the same night.

<sup>783</sup> This statement of the Buddha’s clearly shows that Subhadda is not personally ordained by the Buddha himself. Moreover the Buddha is not physically capable of doing so since he has lain down without the thought of rising again [§5.1].

<sup>784</sup> *Lābhā vo āvuso ānanda, suladdham vo āvuso ānanda, ye [Ce yo] ettha satthu [Ce satthari] sammukhā antevāsābhisekena abhisittā ti*. Comy says that Subhadda makes this statement from his erstwhile non-Buddhist practice (DA 2:590).

<sup>785</sup> This line added by the Council fathers (*saṅgīti, kārā*) (DA 2:590). “Direct disciple,” *sakkhi, sāvaka*, lit “the disciple who witnesses (the Buddha).” Subhadda’s ordination is most interesting as there is no mention of the “act with the motion as the fourth” (*ñatti, catuttha kamma, vācā*, Mahāvagga 1.38 = V 1:69). Without such a ceremony—ie the Buddha ordaining Subhadda himself—leads Rhys Davids to surmise that “it is otherwise probable that no such ceremony was usual in the earliest days of Buddhism” (D:RD 2:170). This may mean that the Vinaya ceremonies as we have them are possibly post-Buddha institutions.

## Chapter 6 (Sixth Recital, *chaṭṭhī bhāṇavāra*)

### THE BUDDHA'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

#### The Dharma-Vinaya as teacher

[154] 6.1 Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, it may be that you would think:

‘Gone is the Teacher’s word! We have no teacher.’

It should not be seen thus, Ānanda, for **the Dharma and the Vinaya [the Teaching and the Discipline] that I have taught and explained to you, will, at my passing, be your teacher.**<sup>786</sup>

6.2 Ānanda, now the monks address one another as ‘Āvuso’ [friend],<sup>787</sup> but after my passing, they should not address one another so. Ānanda, the more junior monks should be addressed by the more senior monks by name, or by clan [gotra] or as ‘Āvuso.’ The more senior monks should be addressed by the more junior monks as ‘Bhante’ [Bhante] or as ‘Āyasmā’ [Venerable].<sup>788</sup>

#### The lesser and minor rules

6.3 Ānanda, after my passing, the order may, if it wishes, abrogate the lesser and minor rules.<sup>789</sup>

#### The supreme penalty imposed on Channa

6.4 Ānanda, after my passing, the supreme penalty should be imposed on Channa.<sup>790</sup>

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<sup>786</sup> **Gāraṇa S** (S 6.2/1:138-140 = SD 12.2) relates how the newly-awakened Buddha declares that the Dharma is his teacher, worthy of his reverence. The above may be said to give the essence of the MPS. The term *satthā* (teacher) is here redefined: while the Buddha lives, *he* is teacher; after his passing, the role is found in the Dharma and Vinaya. With the Buddha’s passing, Buddhism ceases to be a cult (where the teacher or leader is the final authority) and becomes a spiritual system or teaching-centred religion. In this sense, it may be said that the MPS is the Buddha’s last will and testament to his spiritual heirs. On the other hand, while the religious and faith-inclined here accept that the Buddha’s authority and presence have been *spiritually* transferred to the Dharma and Vinaya, they may also perceive that he is “*physically*” transferred into his relics, the stupa and the Buddha image. See Ray 1994: 348-352, 364. On **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108), see foll §6.2 n.

<sup>787</sup> **Āvuso**, meaning “Friend!” “Sir!,” a polite vocative for monks equal in “rains” with the speaker, or to juniors; prob derived from \**āvusso* < \**āyuṣmas* (cf Whitney, *A Sanskrit Grammar*, London, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed 1896 §454); cf BHS *āvusa. āyuṣman*. Uses: (1) by and to non-Buddhists (V 1:8, Upaka; D 2:130, Āḷāra Kālāma; M 1:372, nirgrantha; Tha 1196; J 2:448, 3:230); (2) by monks and nuns (a) to laity (V 1:84; M 1:299, to Visākha; J 3:191, 4:244; (b) to each other (but not to the Buddha), later only by a senior monk to a junior (*āvuso, vādā*) (V 1:9; D 2:154; UA 311); see RO Franke, “The Buddhist Councils at Rājagaha and Vesālī,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1908:18-44. See CPD & DP sv.

<sup>788</sup> The reason here is clearly to prevent fraternizing and disrespect, and to inculcate due respect to seniority, so that proper authority is acknowledged and harmony maintained, hence promoting solidarity in the order. In this way, the Dharma protects the order. In **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108), the Magadha chief minister, Vassakāra, questions Ānanda on authority and succession of power in the order, and Ānanda answers that no one person holds such an authority or power, but that the order has “the Dharma as our refuge” (D 108.9/3:9), that they are guided by the Pātimokkha (D 108.10/3:10), and that an individual monk is respected not for his position but for his spiritual qualities (D 108.11-23/3:10-12) = SD 33.5.

<sup>789</sup> **The lesser and minor rules** (*khuddakānukhuddakā sikkhāpadā*). See Intro (12) above.

<sup>790</sup> A monk named Channa (Skt Chandaka) is depicted at several places in the Vinaya as despising all other monks on the grounds that “the Buddha is mine; the Dharma is mine! It was by my young master that the Dharma was realized” (Saṅgh’ādi, sesa 12 = V 3:177 f.). This would fit in with the post-canonical tradition identifying Channa as the horseman who accompanied the young Prince Siddhartha on the night of the latter’s Great Renunciation. Two rules in the Vinaya—Sanghadisesa 12 & Pacittiya 12—depict him as devious & impossible to admonish. He counter-questioned his examiners during another Saṅgh’ādi, sesa proceeding against him (Saṅghādisesa 12 = V 4:35 ff). Going in search of grass and sticks for his lodging, he damaged the cornfield of a certain brahmin (Pācittiya 19 = V

And what, bhikshus, is the supreme penalty (*brahma,daṇḍa*)?<sup>791</sup>

Bhikshus, let the monk Channa say whatever he wishes to say: that monk should not be spoken to nor admonished nor instructed.”

## THE FINAL MOMENTS

### The Buddha’s last words

**6.5**<sup>792</sup> Then the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Now, bhikshus, there may be doubts or misgivings amongst some monks as regards the Buddha or the Dharma or the Sangha or the path or the way. Ask, bhikshus. Regret not later,<sup>793</sup> [155] saying:

‘We were before the Blessed One, and we were not able to ask the Blessed One face to face!’”

When this was spoken, the monks remained silent.

And for the second time, the Blessed One *addressed the monks*....

And for the third time, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Now, bhikshus, there may be doubts or misgivings amongst some monks as regards the Buddha or the Dharma or the Sangha or the path or the way. Ask, bhikshus. Regret not later, saying:

‘We were before the Blessed One, and we were not able to ask the Blessed One face to face!’”

But for the third time, the monks remained silent.

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks:

‘If, bhikshus, you do not ask out of respect for the Teacher, then, bhikshus, let a friend tell it another friend.’

When this was spoken, the monks remained silent.

**6.6** Then the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“It is wonderful, bhante! It is marvellous, bhante! I have faith [confidence], bhante, in this order of monks, that there is neither doubt nor misgiving in a single monk as regards the Buddha or the Dharma or the Sangha or the path or the way.”

“Ānanda, you speak out of *faith* (*pasāda*). But Ānanda the Tathāgata *knows* here that there is in this order of monks, neither doubt nor misgiving in a single monk as regards the Buddha or the Dharma or the Sangha or the path or the way.

For, Ānanda, in these 500 monks<sup>794</sup> even the most backward [the least developed] monk is a stream-winner, not bound for the lower world,<sup>795</sup> destined for awakening.’

4:47). He once cut down a tree shrine revered by the people to make space for a residence (Saṅgh’ādi,sesa 7 = V 3:155 f.). He was generally disrespectful to others (Pācittiya 54 = V 4:113).

As defined by the Buddha, **the supreme penalty** (*brahma,daṇḍa*) is effectively a total boycott by the order. The closing of Culla, vagga 11 of the Vinaya records how when Ānanda conveys the supreme penalty to Channa at Ghoṣit’ārāma (in Kosambī), he faints at the thought of being boycotted by the order. He then goes into retreat to develop himself (V 2:292). **Channa S** (S 22.90) records in a humorous tone, how he attempts to seek Dharma instruction from other monks, and how Ānanda admonishes him (S 3:133 ff.). Apparently, no monk actually boycotts him, since they try to answer his questions, albeit careful to not offend him. As Ānanda then explains in that passage, the supreme penalty is automatically lifted at the moment of Channa’s final attainment.

**Channa S** (S 22.90) tells a different version of how Channa corrects himself—Ānanda gives the teachings of the **Kaccāna, gotta S** (S 12.15/2:17) on how dependent arising counters the two extreme views of eternalism and annihilationism, and how self-view is replaced by the realization that it is only *dukkha* that arises and ceases—and he breaks through to the Dharma (S 3:132-134). Cf D 1:96 where *brahma,daṇḍa* is used differently.

<sup>791</sup> The *brahma,daṇḍa* is a total boycott of a monk who is scurrilous (*mukhara*) and uncivil to other monks (VA 7:1402 on the Parivāra). Comy says that, after being boycotted by the Sangha, Channa experiences samvega (spiritual urgency) so that he finally directs all his efforts towards spiritual training and attains breakthrough (SA 2:317 f), as reported in (**Dvi,lakkhaṇa**) **Channa S** (S 22.90/3:132-135) = SD 56.5.

<sup>792</sup> This § [5] is found in **Kusinārā S** (A 4.76/2:79 f).

<sup>793</sup> *Mā pacchā vippaṭṭisārino ahuvattha*, also occurs at §§5.19+20, & here x3 (the Buddha’s last words) = **Kusinārā S** (A 4.76/2:79 f); **Devatā S** (A 9.19/4:392). Elsewhere, it forms the well known call to meditate: see **Araka S** (A 22.70.4/3:139) = SD 16.17 & n. For comy, see MA 1:195 f, SA 3:111 f, 266 f.

<sup>794</sup> According to the Vinaya—see §6.20n on the old Subhadda below—the Buddha was journeying with 1250 monks (V 1:249 f) when he was visited by the old Subhadda at Atumā [§4.30]. There appears a discrepancy in the number of monks here. However, it is possible that the 1250 refers to a total number of monks accompanying the



6.7 <sup>796</sup>Then the Blessed One addressed the monks: [156]

“Now, bhikkhus, I exhort you: **all formations are of the nature to decay—strive on heedfully!**”<sup>797</sup>  
These were the Tathāgata’s last words.

### The Buddha’s dying process

6.8a <sup>798</sup>Then the Blessed One attained to the first dhyana.

Emerging from the first dhyana, he attained to the second dhyana.

Emerging from the second dhyana, he attained to the third dhyana.

Emerging from the third dhyana, he attained to the fourth dhyana.

Emerging from the fourth dhyana, he attained to the base of infinite space.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of infinite space, he attained to the base of infinite consciousness.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness, he attained to the base of nothingness.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of nothingness, he attained to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he attained to the cessation of perception and feeling.<sup>799</sup>

Buddha, but the 500 refers only to the saints sitting close to the Buddha. It is unlikely that the entourage had started with 1250 but dwindled to 500 at this crucial point.

<sup>795</sup> *Avinīpāta*, alt tr “not fated for birth in a suffering state”; opp of *vinīpāta*, “the world of suffering,” another name for the 4 woeful courses (*duggati*) or the 4 lower worlds (*apāya*) (Vism 13.92 f). Sometimes 5 woeful courses (*pañca,gati*) (D 3:234=33.2.1, A 11.68) are mentioned: the hells (*nīraya*), the animal kingdom (*tirachāna,yoni*), the ghost realm (*pitti,visaya*), the human world (*manussa*) and the heavenly world (*deva*). Of these, the first three are woeful, with the asura-demons (*asura,kāya*) as the fourth woeful course. The remaining two are “happy courses” (*sugati*). For a discussion, see Nyanaponika & Bodhi (tr), *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, 1999:14-19.

<sup>796</sup> The foll §§ [6.7-10] are at **Parinibbāna S** (S 1:157-159) but differs as to order of sentences.

<sup>797</sup> *Vaya,dhammā saṅkhārā, appamādena sampādethā ti*. In **Parinibbāna S** (S 6.2), this is reversed: *appamādena sampādetha, vaya,dhammā saṅkhārā ti* (S 6.2/1:158). However, Bhikkhu Bodhi appears not to have noticed this, rendering it like in Mahāparinibbāna S (S:B 251). The Sarvāstivāda ed omits *appamādena sampādetha*. The Chinese versions vary, T1 eg gives a more elaborate exhortation here.

<sup>798</sup> As at **Parinibbāna S** (S 6.15/1:157 f) but it omits Ānanda’s remark that the Buddha (while in cessation) had passed away, and Anuruddha’s reply. It also omits mention of the earth-tremor and thunder. In Parinibbāna S, Ānanda’s stanza precedes Anuruddha’s (which is last, showing its importance) but in Mahā Parinibbāna S Anuruddha’s stanza comes first, and Ānanda’s stanza is last.

The parinirvana process that follows here is evidently noted by Anuruddha, the foremost of the monks, through his “divine eye” (*dibba,cakkhu*), ie clairvoyance (A 1:23). See foll § [6.9]. Interestingly, **Apadāna** describes Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī’s parinirvana in similar terms (except for the cessation of perception and feeling):

Having sent them all away, she attained to the supreme state,

To the first dhyana, and the second and the third and the fourth. (145)

Then she attained to the realm of (boundless) space, and of boundless consciousness, too;

To the realm of nothingness, and to neither perception (nor non-perception) in stages. (146)

Then Gotamī attained to the dhyanas in reverse; then from the first as far as the fourth dhyana.\* (147)

Having risen from there, free from the influxes, she went out like a lamp.

The great earth shook, lightning fell from the sky. (148)

*Tato sātā visajjivā, paṭhamam jhānam uttamam; | Dutiyañ ca tatiyañ ca, samāpajji catutthakam.* || 145

*Ākāsa’āyatanam c’eva, viññānañc’āyatanam tathā; | Ākiñcam n’eva saññañ ca, samāpajji yathākkamam.* || 146

*Paṭilomena jhānāni, samāpajjittha gotamī; | Yāvatā paṭhamam jhānam, tato yāva catutthakam.\** || 147

*Tato vuṭṭhāya nibbāyi, dīpac,c-īva nirāsavā. | Bhūmi,cālo mahā āsi, nabhasā vijjutā pati.* || 148 (Ap 145-48)

[\*Cf J S Walters, “Gotamī’s Story,” 1995:133 f, where he apparently errs in his tr of Ap 147d.]

**Saṅgīti S** (D 33.3.2(6)) says that by attaining the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, sensuous perception (*kāma,sañña*) stops; by attaining the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana, initial application and sustained application stops; by attaining the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana, zest stops; by attaining the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, in-and-out breathing stops (D 33.3.2(6)/3:266, 290). On dhyana, see SD 8.4 (2005). On *nirodha*, see SD 1.1 Intro (6). See S:B 441 n441.

**6.8b** Then the venerable Ānanda addressed the venerable Anuruddha thus:<sup>800</sup>

“Bhante Anuruddha, the Blessed One has attained parinirvana!”

“Avuso Ānanda, the Blessed One has not attained parinirvana: he has attained to the cessation of perception and feeling.”

**6.9**<sup>801</sup> Then the Blessed One, emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling, attained to the attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he attained to the base of the attainment of nothingness.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of nothingness, he attained to the base of infinite consciousness.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness, he attained to the base of infinite space.

Emerging from the attainment of the base of infinite space, he attained to the fourth dhyana.

Emerging from the fourth dhyana, he attained to the third dhyana.

Emerging from the third dhyana, he attained to the second dhyana.

Emerging from the second dhyana, he attained to the first dhyana.

Emerging from the first dhyana, he attained to the second dhyana.

Emerging from the second dhyana, he attained to the third dhyana.

Emerging from the third dhyana, he attained to the fourth dhyana.

Emerging from the fourth dhyana, immediately after which<sup>802</sup> the Blessed One attained parinirvana.<sup>803</sup>

<sup>799</sup> “The cessation of perception and feeling,” *saññā,vediyita nirodha*. This anomalous state, fully described in **Visuddhi, magga** (Vism 23.16-52/702-709), is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight where all mental states temporarily shut down (Vism 23.43/707 f), “devoid of even subtle feeling and cognition, due to turning away from even the very refined peace of the fourth formless level.” (Harvey 1993:10 digital ed). Here the heart-beat and breathing stop (M 1:301 f), but a residual metabolism keeps the body alive for up to 7 days (Vism 23.42/ 707). Only an arhat or a non-returner can experience this cessation (A 3:194; 23.18/Vism 702, 23.49/708). On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainment (Vism 708). “It is thus one possible route to experiencing Nibbāna” (Harvey 1993:10 digital ed). While a dead person has neither vitality nor heat, and their sense-organs are “broken up,” a person in cessation still has vitality and heat, and his sense-organs are “purified” (M 1:296; D 2:334; Vism 23.51/709). According to Buddhaghosa, cessation is “the non-occurrence of the mind (*citta*) and mental states as a result of their progressive cessation” (Vism 23.18/ 702). Such a person is “without mind” (Vism 23.43/707). Even the sub-conscious (*bhavaṅga*), present in dreamless sleep, is absent; such a person is effectively only body without any mental states whatsoever. In modern terms, “deep hibernation” or “suspended animation” might give some idea of this state of cessation. See §3.33 n above. On the philosophical problems related to how the meditator emerges from cessation, see Griffiths 1986. On “the progressive cessation of formations” (*anupubba,sañkhārānaṃ nirodha*), see S 36.11/4:217.

<sup>800</sup> Ānanda, assuming that the Buddha has passed away, addresses Anuruddha, his senior, as “bhante,” in line with the Buddha’s instructions [§6.2].

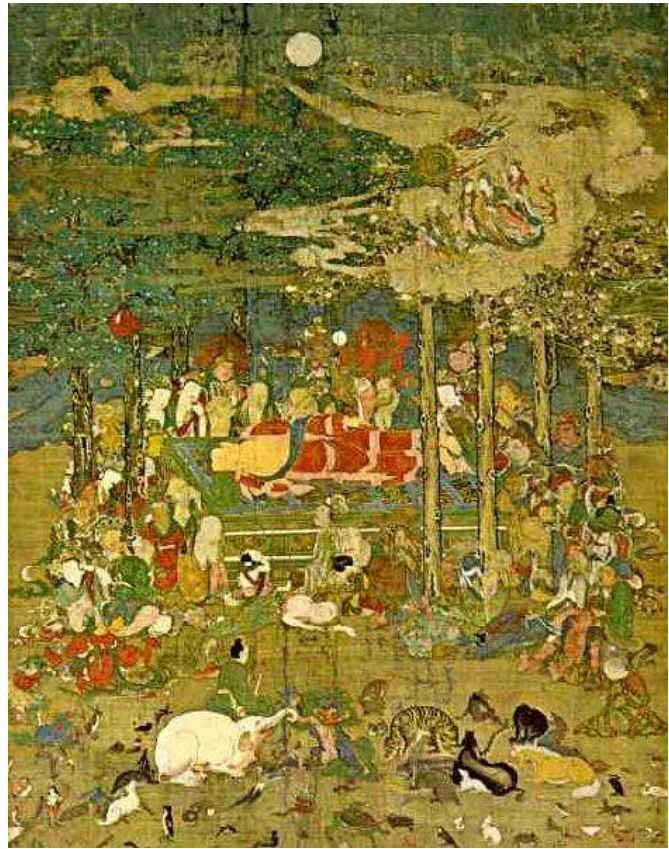
<sup>801</sup> This § [9] as at **Vihāra S 2** (A 9.33/4:410 ff).

<sup>802</sup> *Samanantarā*. Saṃyutta Comy: Here there are 2 kinds of *samanantarā*: immediately after dhyana and immediately after reviewing. In the former case, one emerges from the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, descends into the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) and attains parinirvana. In the latter case, one emerges from the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, reviews the dhyana-factors again, then descends into the life-continuum and attains parinirvana, as in the case of the Buddha. But Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas, noble disciples, and even ants and termites, pass away, by way of the noble truth of suffering, with a karmically indeterminate *bhavaṅga* consciousness (SA 1:224).

<sup>803</sup> These stages that the Buddha passes through in his very last moments—the 4 dhyanas (*jhāna*), the 4 formless attainments (*samāpatti*) and the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*)—are known as “the 9 successive abodes” (*anupubba,vihāra*) (D 3:265, 290; cf 2:156,4; A 4:410, 414; S 2:216, 222; U 78; Pm 1.5, 2.30; Miln 176. Cf Waldschmidt 1951:394; DĀ 2 = T1.1.26b21-26c8, T1.6.188b19-c7; T1.7.205a3-b1). The Elottar’ā-gama says that **Mahā Prajāpati Gautamī**, too, goes through the same meditation sequence before passing away in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, accompanied by a great earth-tremor (EĀ 52.1 = T 2.125.821b25-822a23). These stages are also called “the 9 successive cessations” (*anupubba,nirodha*) (D 33.3.2(6)/3:266, 290; A 9.31/ 4:409, 456; Pm 1.35). The **(Anupubba) Vihāra S 2** calls them “the successive attainments” (*anupubba,samāpatti*) (A 9.33/4:410-414). On “the progressive cessation of formations” (*anupubba,sañkhārānaṃ nirodha*), see **Rahogata S** (S 36.11/4:217). There are 2 possible explanations why the Buddha passes away in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana rather than in any other meditative



**The Great Parinirvana:**  
(l) Modern Myanmar drawing;  
(r) Japanese painting, 1392.



### The four verses<sup>804</sup>

**6.10a** (1) And when the Blessed One had passed into parinirvana, **Brahmā Sahampati**<sup>805</sup> uttered this stanza on that occasion.<sup>806</sup>

plane; (1) he still has a physical body, (2) the formless dhyanas do not provide any avenue out of samsara, serving only as highest states of meditative bliss in samsara. Hence, we see the pre-eminence of the four form dhyanas for the Buddhists. For Buddhaghosa's views, see DA 594 f = Yang-Gu An (tr). *The Buddha's Last Days*, 2003:185-187.

The German Tibetophile, self-styled Lama Govinda, for some strange reason, thinks that this event “confirms our assumption that the death-consciousness coincides with the fifth jhāna from where two ways are open to the meditator: that of remembrance of former lives or that which leads to the four arūpaloka-jhānas” (*The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, 1961:131). Are we to understand that at the moment of dying all beings, or at least human beings, would attain the four (Abhidharma “fifth”) dhyana? On Govinda, see Lopez, Jr, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 1998:7, 59-63.

<sup>804</sup> **Parinibbāna S** of the Brahma Saṃyutta (S 1:158) contains the first verse since it is attributed to Brahmā. The second is Sakra's. The last two verses are there put into the mouths of Ānanda and of Anuruddha respectively, perhaps because Anuruddha's verse forms a more fitting conclusion (S 1:158). In the Dīgha, however, Ānanda's verse comes last, “either in deprecation of Ānanda (which is scarcely probable), or more probably the way in which the early Buddhists regarded the passing of the Buddha. These four speakers are ‘four representative persons’: **Brahmā**, the exalted god of the brahmins; **Sakra** (Śakra), the king of the gods, popular with the Buddhists; **Anuruddha**, the holy, thoughtful arhat; and **Ānanda**, the loving, childlike disciple” (D:RD 2:71, 73). The Chinese *Mahā Parinirvāna Sūtra of the Dīrgh'āgama Sūtra* (Nanjio no 545) records 18 speakers uttering stanzas on this occasion (see *Sino-Indian Studies* 1,4 1945).



All beings in the world shall forsake this bodily formation!  
 Even the Teacher, peerless in the human world, is such a one.  
 The One Thus-come, empowered,<sup>807</sup> the self-awakened has passed away.

**6.10b** <sup>808</sup> And when the Blessed One had passed into parinirvana,<sup>809</sup> it was accompanied<sup>810</sup> by a great earth-tremor, terrifying and hair-raising, and thunder-peals [the sky-drums bursting forth].<sup>811</sup> [157]

(2) And when the Blessed One had passed into parinirvana, **Sakra, the kings of the devas**, uttered this stanza at that very moment:<sup>812</sup>

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Impermanent, alas, are all compounded things! | It is their nature to rise and fall; |
| Having arisen, they pass away—                | Happy it is when they are stilled!   |

(3) And when the Blessed One had passed into parinirvana, **the venerable Anuruddha** uttered this stanza at that very moment:<sup>813</sup>

There is no more in-breath and out-breath for such a one of steady mind,<sup>814</sup>  
 The wise sage [silent sage], unstirred, bent on peace, passed away.  
 With mind unshaken, he endured the feeling [the pain]:  
 Like a lamp extinguished, his mind is freed.

(4) And when the Blessed One had passed into parinirvana, **the venerable Ānanda** uttered this stanza at that very moment:<sup>815</sup>

Then there was terror, then there was hair-raising fear,  
 When the self-awakened one, perfect in all excellent qualities, attained parinirvana.

## The monks lament

<sup>805</sup> **Brahmā Sahampati** (who had just after the Great Awakening invited the Buddha to proclaim the Dharma) (V 1:5-7 = M 1:169 = S 1:138 f). See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:4.2.

<sup>806</sup> “At that very moment,” free tr of *saha parinibbānā*. See n on the 1<sup>st</sup> line here.

<sup>807</sup> *Bala-p.patta*, here refers to the Buddha’s 10 powers: see **Mahā Sīhanāda S** (M 12.9-20/1:69-71).

<sup>808</sup> This § [6.10] as at Tha 905, 1046, A 1:236; cf Tha 905

<sup>809</sup> Traditionally, it is said that the Buddha passed away in the early hours of the full-moon day of the month of Vaiśākha, 543 BC (or, according to modern scholars, c. 483 BCE) at the age of 80. To remember the Buddha and mark this important occasion, south and south-east Asian Buddhists calculate their respective **Buddhist calendars** from this year (that is, by adding the number 543 to the Common Era). On whether the Buddha actually died on Vesak day, see **Intro (9d)**.

<sup>810</sup> The phrase in the sentence thus far: *Parinibbute Bhagavati saha parinibbānā*.

<sup>811</sup> A similar phenomenon (*dhamma,niyāma*) follows immediately after the Buddha relinquishes the rest of his lifespan [§3.10].

<sup>812</sup> **Sakra**, the king of the gods, utters this popular ancient verse, said to be a remnant from the teaching of the previous Buddha that only he remembers: **D 16.6.10/2:157 = D 17.2.17/2:199 = S v21/1.11/1:6, 609, S v609/6.15/1:158, S v776/9.6/1:200 = S 15.20/2:193 (Buddha) = J 95/1:392 = Tha 1159 = DhA 1.6/1:71; DA 3:748; MA 1:235**. This famous stanza concludes **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17.2.17.4/2:199) = SD 36.12.

<sup>813</sup> As at Tha 905 f, but with an additional stanza: “These now are the sage’s last sense-impressions, with touch as the fifth;\* no other mental phenomena will there be, the awakened one is cooled” (**Tha 907**). [\*The other 4: feeling, perception, volition, consciousness.] In **Parinibbana S** (S 1:158), Anuruddha’s stanza here appears last, after Ānanda’s, showing its importance.

<sup>814</sup> “Such a one of steady mind” (*thita,cittassa tādino*; Skt *sthira,cittasya tāyinaḥ*, Avadś 2.199). Here, the meaning is something deeper than the mere fact that the Buddha’s respiration has stopped (or that he is “clinically dead”), but that he is no more defined by the kind of breathing that keep us alive; he is immeasurable: he is in nirvana. On *tādino* (gen sg) see **Sabba Kamma Jaha S** (U 3.1.12/21) & SD 39.3 (1.4.2).

<sup>815</sup> See prec n.



**6.10c** When the Blessed One passed into parinirvana, some of those monks who were still not free from lust lamented, with arms outstretched; fallen to the ground as if their feet have been cut off,<sup>816</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

“Too soon has the Blessed One [158] entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Sugata [Wellfarer] entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Eye in the world disappeared!”

But those monks that are free from lust accept it mindfully and fully aware,  
‘Impermanent are formations [conditioned things]! How else could it be?’<sup>817</sup>

**6.11a** Then the venerable Anuruddha addressed the monks:

“Enough, avuso, do not grieve! Do not weep! Has not the Blessed One told you before: ‘All those things that are dear and pleasant to us must suffer difference, separation and change [becoming other]? What else do you expect? Whatever is born, become, formed [compounded], is liable to decay—that it should not decay is impossible.’<sup>818</sup>

Avuso, the devas are grumbling [protesting against your lamentation]!”

### The devas lament<sup>819</sup>

**6.11b** <sup>820</sup>“But, bhante, what kinds of devatas is the venerable Anuruddha considering?”

“There are, Ānanda, devatas who perceive earth in the sky [who assume a gross form so that they can stand in the air];<sup>821</sup> lamenting, with hair dishevelled; lamenting, with arms outstretched; fallen to the ground as if their feet have been cut off,<sup>822</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

‘Too soon has the Blessed One entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Sugata [Wellfarer] entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Eye in the world disappeared!’

**6.11c** There are, Ānanda, devatas who perceive earth in earth [who assume a gross form so that they can stand in the ground];<sup>823</sup> lamenting, with hair dishevelled; lamenting, with arms outstretched; fallen to the ground as if their feet have been cut off,<sup>824</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

‘Too soon has the Blessed One entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Sugata [Wellfarer] entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Eye in the world disappeared!’

But those devatas that are free from lust accept it mindfully and fully aware,  
‘Impermanent are conditioned things! How else could it be?’

## THE LAST RITES

### Anuruddha and Ānanda

**6.12a**<sup>825</sup> Then the venerable Anuruddha and the venerable Ānanda spent the rest of the night in Dharma discourse. Then the venerable Anuruddha said to the venerable Ānanda:

“Go, avuso Ānanda, into Kusinārā and announce to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying:

‘Vāsetṭhas, the Blessed One has attained parinirvana. Now is the time for you to do as you think fit.’”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied in assent to the venerable Anuruddha, and having dressed himself, carrying his robe and bowl, entered Kusinārā with a companion. [159]

<sup>816</sup> “As if their feet have been cut off,” reading *chinnam pādāṃ viya papatanti* throughout following Se. PTS has *chinna,papātāṃ papatanti* throughout (D 16.5.6/2:140, 6.10/2:157, 6.11/2:158). Cf *chinna,pādā* (J 6:301, 303).

<sup>817</sup> *Tam kut’ etha labbhā?* Lit, “What can you get here?” As at §§5.6, 6.11.

<sup>818</sup> This nested quote is stock: D 16.3.48/2:118=16.5.14/144=16.6.11a/158=16.6.20/163.

<sup>819</sup> This whole section repeats in §5.6, in the Buddha’s mouth.

<sup>820</sup> The following sections [§§6.11-15]—Anuruddha consoles Ānanda, instructs him to announce the Buddha’s passing to the Mallas, and the laying in state—are unique to this Sutta.

<sup>821</sup> See n in §5.6b above.

<sup>822</sup> “As if their feet have been cut off,” reading *chinnam pādāṃ viya papatanti* throughout following Se. PTS has *chinna,papātāṃ papatanti* throughout (D 16.5.6/2:140, 6.10/2:157, 6.11/2:158). Cf *chinna,pādā* (J 6:301, 303).

<sup>823</sup> See n in §5.6b above.

<sup>824</sup> “As if their feet have been cut off,” see n at 6.11a.

<sup>825</sup> This whole §6.12 is similar to §§5.19-21 when the Mallas of Kusinārā were informed of the Buddha’s impending parinirvana.

### The Mallas of Kusinārā mourn

**6.12b** Now at that time, the Mallas of Kusinārā were gathered in their assembly hall attending to some business. Then the venerable Ānanda went to the assembly hall of the Mallas of Kusinārā, and announced to the Mallas of Kusinārā thus:

“Vāseṭṭhas, the Tathāgata has attained parinirvana. Now is the time for you to do as you think fit.”

**6.12c** Then when they had heard the venerable Ānanda, the Mallas, the sons of the Mallas, the daughters-in-law of the Mallas, and the wives of the Mallas were grieved and saddened, afflicted at heart, and some of them lamented, with hair dishevelled; they lamented, with arms outstretched; they fell to the ground as if their feet have been cut off,<sup>826</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

“Too soon has the Blessed One entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Sugata [Wellfarer] entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Eye in the world disappeared!”

**6.13a** Then the Mallas of Kusinārā commanded their workers, saying:

“Come now,<sup>827</sup> gather together incense and garlands, and all the musicians in Kusinārā!”

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā brought the incense and garlands and all the musicians, and 500 yugas<sup>828</sup> of cloth [new unbleached cotton cloth],<sup>829</sup> to the Upavattana sal grove at Kusinārā. Having approached the Blessed One’s remains, they passed the day, honouring, respecting, esteeming and venerating the Blessed One’s remains with dancing, music, singing, garlands, and fragrances, and making canopies of flowers and arranging circles of wreaths [garlands].

**6.13b** Then this occurred to the Mallas of Kusinārā:

“It is too late to cremate the Blessed One’s remains today. We will cremate the Blessed One’s remains tomorrow.”

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā passed the second day, honouring, respecting, esteeming and venerating the Blessed One’s remains with dancing, music, singing, garlands, and fragrances, and making canopies of flowers and arranging circles of wreaths [garlands]; and they passed the third day in that way, too; and they passed the fourth day in that way, too; and they passed the fifth day in that way, too; and they passed the sixth day in that way, too.

### The seventh day

**6.14** Then on the seventh day, this occurred to the Mallas of Kusinārā: **[160]**

“We, honouring, respecting, esteeming and venerating the Blessed One’s remains with dancing, music, singing, garlands, and fragrances, will bear the Blessed One’s remains to the south of the city and we will cremate the Blessed One’s remains outside the city, in the south.”<sup>830</sup>

Now at that time, eight Malla chieftains washed their heads and donned unbleached garments [as a mark of mourning], thinking,

“We will bear the Blessed One’s remains,” but they were unable to do so.

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā said this to the venerable Anuruddha:

“What is the reason, bhante, what is the cause [condition], bhante, that these eight Malla chieftains, with heads washed and donning unbleached garments, thinking of bearing the Blessed One’s remains have been unable to do so?”

“Vāseṭṭhas, it is because your intention is one thing, the intention of the devatas another.”

**6.15** “But what, bhante, is the intention of the devatas?”

<sup>826</sup> “As if their feet have been cut off,” reading *chinnaṃ pādāṃ viya papatanti* throughout following Se. PTS has *chinna,papātāṃ papatanti* throughout (D 16.5.6/2:140, 6.10/2:157, 6.11/2:158). Cf *chinna,pādā* (J 6:301, 303).

<sup>827</sup> “Come now,” *bhaṇe*, PED: (1<sup>st</sup> sg med of *bhaṇati*), “I say,” used as an interjection of emphasis, like “to be sure,” “look here.” It is a familiar term of address, often used by a king to his subjects (V 1:240, 241; Miln 21).

<sup>828</sup> First mentioned at §5.11b above; again at §6.17 below.

<sup>829</sup> See §5.11 above. No “teased cotton” is mentioned here: see §6.17-18 below.

<sup>830</sup> *Mayaṃ Bhagavato sarīraṃ naccehi gītehi vāditehi mālehi gandhehi sakkarontā garukarontā mānentā pūjentā, dakkhiṇena dakkhiṇaṃ nagarassa haritvā bāhīrena bāhiraṃ dakkhiṇato nagarassa Bhagavato sarīraṃ jhāpes-sāma ti*. Cf §6.15 n. The Mallas are probably keeping to some ancient taboo against ritually polluting the city with a dead body. So they have to skirt the city and also take an inauspicious direction for a funeral. The devatas however think otherwise [§6.15]. Cf §6.23a & n. See D:RD 2:182 n1. On the ancient Indian notion of ritual impurity of death, see Gombrich 1988:123 f.

“Your intention, Vāseṭṭhas, is thus:

‘We, honouring, respecting, esteeming and venerating the Blessed One’s remains with dancing, music, singing, garlands, and scents, will bear the Blessed One’s remains to the south of the city and we will cremate the Blessed One’s remains outside the city, in the south.’

But the devatas’ intention, Vāseṭṭhas, is thus:

‘We, honouring, respecting, esteeming and venerating the Blessed One’s remains with heavenly dancing, music, singing, garlands, and scents, will bear the Blessed One’s remains to the north of the city, enter the city through the north gate and bear the Blessed One’s remains around the middle of the city, exit through the city’s east gate, go east of the city to the Malla shrine called Makuṭa Bandhana,<sup>831</sup> and there we will cremate the Blessed One’s remains.’<sup>832</sup>

“If that is the devatas’ intention, bhante, let it be so!”<sup>833</sup>

**6.16** Now at that time, even the rubbish-dumps and sewers of Kusinārā were covered knee-deep in heavenly mandarava [coral-tree] flowers. Then the devatas and the Mallas of Kusinārā, honouring, respecting, esteeming and venerating the Blessed One’s remains with heavenly and human [161] dancing, music, singing, garlands, and scents, bore the Blessed One’s remains to the north of the city, entered the city through the north gate and bore the Blessed One’s remains around the middle of the city, exited through the city’s east gate, went east of the city to the Malla shrine called Makuṭa Bandhana. And there they put down the Blessed One’s remains.

### Preparations for cremation

**6.17** Then the Mallas of Kusinārā said this to the venerable Ānanda:<sup>834</sup>

“How shall we treat the Blessed One’s remains?”

“Vāseṭṭhas, treat the Tathāgata’s remains as you would the remains of a wheel-turning king [a just world ruler].”

“But how, bhante, is the bodily remains of a wheel-turning king to be treated?”

“Vāseṭṭhas, the body should be wrapped alternately with new unbleached cotton cloth and then with a layer of teased cotton. It should be done in this manner to the length of 500 yugas [plough-lengths],<sup>835</sup> and then the body is placed in an oil-vat of iron. This should be covered with an iron lid. The pyre should comprise totally of fragrant material, and then cremate the body. Then a stupa [burial mound] should be built at the crossroads [where four highways meet]. This is how, Vāseṭṭhas, the remains of a wheel-turning king is to be treated.

Ānanda, just as one treats the remains of a wheel-turning king, even so, one should treat the remains of the Tathāgata. Then a stupa [cairn or burial mound] should be built for the Tathāgata at the crossroads [where four highways meet]. And they who offer a garland, scent, or perfume powder, or bow down there, or brighten their minds with faith there, it will be for their profit and welfare for a long time to come.”

**6.18** Then the Mallas of Kusinārā commanded their workers:

“Come now, gather together teased cotton.”

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā wrapped the Blessed One’s remains alternately with new unbleached cotton cloth and then [162] with a layer of teased cotton, and they did this to the length of 500 yugas [plough-lengths]. Then the body was placed in an oil-vat of iron, which was then covered with an iron lid. The pyre was made up totally of fragrant material.

## MAHĀ KASSAPA

<sup>831</sup> This location, where the Buddha’s remains are cremated, is believed to be marked today by the Rāmabhār Stūpa (about 15 m or 50 ft high), located about 1.5 km from Māthā-kuār Shrine.

<sup>832</sup> *Mayaṃ Bhagavato sarīraṃ dibbehi naccehi gūtehi vāditehi mālehi gandhehi sakkarontā garukarontā mānentā pūjentā, uttarena uttaram nagarassa haritvā, uttarena dvārena nagaram pavesetvā, majjhena majjham nagarassa haritvā, puratthimena dvārena nikkhamitvā puratthimato nagarassa Makuṭa, bandhanam nāma Mallānam cetiyam, ettha Bhagavato sarīraṃ jhāpessāmā ti.* Cf §6.14 n.

<sup>833</sup> *Yathā bhante devatānam adhippāyo tathā hotū ti*, lit “Bhante, whatever the devatas’ intentions, let them be.”

<sup>834</sup> This whole section parallels §5.11 (D 2:141 f).

<sup>835</sup> See §5.11b nn.

## Mahā Kassapa's last respects

**6.19** <sup>836</sup>Now at that time, the venerable Mahā Kassapa was journeying on the highroad from Pāvā to Kusinārā with a large community of monks, numbering some 500. Then the venerable Mahā Kassapa stepped down from the highroad and sat down under a certain tree.

Now at that time, a certain naked ascetic [ājīvaka], <sup>837</sup> holding a mandarava [coral-tree] flower, was journeying along the highroad from Kusinārā to Pāvā. The venerable Mahā Kassapa saw the naked ascetic coming from afar. Seeing the naked ascetic, the venerable Mahā Kassapa said this to the naked ascetic:

“Avuso, do you know our Teacher?”

“Yes, avuso, I do know. Seven days ago today the recluse Gotama attained parinirvana. For that reason, I found this mandarava flower.”

Then, some of those monks who were still not free from lust lamented, with arms outstretched; fallen to the ground as if their feet have been cut off, <sup>838</sup> rolling to and fro, crying:

“Too soon has the Blessed One entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Sugata [Wellfarer] entered parinirvana! Too soon has the Eye in the world disappeared!”

But those monks that were free from lust accept it mindfully and fully aware,  
‘Impermanent are conditioned things! How else could it be?’

## The old Subhadda

**6.20** Now at that time, seated amongst the group was **Subhadda**, <sup>839</sup> who had gone forth in old age. Subhadda then said this to the monks:

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<sup>836</sup> There are two canonical versions of the next 2 sections [§§6.19-20]: the **Dīgha** version (Mahā Parinibbāna S) gives in narrative form (as before), and the **Vinaya** version (V 2:284-308 = Cullavagga 11), put into the mouth of Mahā Kassapa himself. An interesting point here is that in the Dīgha version, **Mahā Kassapa's speech** is put after the outburst of the old Subhadda (different from the newly ordained Subhadda) [§§5.23-29]. The Vinaya, however, puts it before the old Subhadda's remark—that is, the last two paragraphs in the Dīgha are transposed in the Vinaya (D:RD 2:75). **Hermann Oldenberg** was the first western scholar to point out (*Vinaya Texts*, 1881:xxvi-xxviii) the parallel between the two texts. He suggests that the change is due to the position occupied by this episode in the Vinaya. It is there used as an introduction to the account of the Council of Rājagṛha held, according to the Theravāda, to counteract such sentiments as were expressed by the old Subhadda's outburst. It was considered more appropriate, therefore, that *in that connection*, Subhadda's words should come last, to lead up to what follows. The whole story is then interpolated from our sutta. But the last paragraph is transposed, and the whole is put into Mahā Kassapa's mouth, on whose advice the Council is said to have been convened. **RO Franke**, in his article, “The Buddha councils at Rājagṛha and Vesālī,” gives various details showing how Cullavagga 11 of the Vinaya is heavily dependent on the MPS (1908:8-18). Unlike Oldenberg and Franke, however, **TW Rhys Davids** rejects the notion that Cv 11 borrowed from MPS, suggesting that “the Subhadda story may have been in existence before either Dīgha or Vinaya was put into its present shape. If so, it was doubtless current in the form now preserved by the Dīgha; and was changed by the compilers of the Vinaya...it is quite possible that the two books—Dīgha and Vinaya—may have been put together, as we now have them, at the same time” (D:RD 2:76 n1). See An Yang-Gyu, “The date and the origin of the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta,” 2001:64-66 & Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:6.27.

<sup>837</sup> **Ājīvaka**. The naked ascetics (V 1:291, 2:130) are followers of Makkhali Gosāla (the teacher of fatalism or determinism), and regarded as the worst of the non-Buddhist religious. See **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 1:238) and also S 1:66. Upaka was a naked ascetic who converted when he met the newly awakened Buddha (V 1:8; M 1:71; J 1:81; DhA 4: 71 f).

<sup>838</sup> “As if their feet have been cut off,” reading *chinnaṃ pādāṃ viya papatanti* throughout following Se. PTS has *chinna,papātāṃ papatanti* throughout (D 16.5.6/2:140, 6.10/2:157, 6.11/2:158). Cf *chinna,pādā* (J 6:301, 303).

<sup>839</sup> **The old Subhadda (Subhadra)**. The Mahāvagga of the Vinaya has an interesting story of “a former barber, one gone forth in old age” (*vuḍḍha,pabbajito nahāpita,pubbo*) who, on learning that the Buddha and 1250 monks are coming to Ātumā [§4.30], instructs his two sons, “sweet-voiced, witty, skilled, skillful in their craft in the profession of their own teacher,” to go from house to house to beg for “*nāli* measures of offerings, and collect salt and oil and husked rice and solid food” (begging for such things are not allowed by the Vinaya) to prepare coney for the Buddha and the monks. On learning of this, the Buddha laid down two rules entailing wrong-doing (*dukkha*): (1) “One who who gone forth should not make cause (others) to take what is not allowable.” (2) “One who was formerly a barber should not carry about a barber's equipment.” (V 1:249 f). On *nāli* (a measure), see V:H 1:12 n2. Buddhaghosa (DA 2:599) identifies the “one gone forth in old age” as **the old Subhadda** (then a novice, *sāmaṇera*) mentioned in Mahā Parinibbāna S as being relieved at the Buddha's passing (D 16.6.20/2:162), and refers to the V



“Enough, brothers, do not sorrow! Do not weep! We are free of that great sage! We were harassed<sup>840</sup> thus: ‘This is allowable to you! This is not allowable to you!’ But now we can do what we like, and not do what we do not like!”<sup>841</sup>

Then the venerable Mahā Kassapa addressed the monks:

“Enough, avusos, do not grieve! Do not weep! [163] Has the Blessed One not told you before:<sup>842</sup> ‘All those things that are dear and pleasant to us must suffer difference, separation and change [becoming other]? What else do you expect? Whatever is born, become, formed [compounded], is liable to decay—that it should not decay is impossible.’”<sup>843</sup>

## CREMATION AND RELICS

### The cremation

**6.21a**<sup>844</sup> Now at that time, the four Malla chieftains, having washed their hair and donned unbleached garments, thought, “We will light the Blessed One’s pyre,” but they were unable to light it.

Then the Malla chieftains said this to the venerable Anuruddha:

“Bhante, what is the reason for this, venerable Anuruddha? What is the cause [condition] for this, that we having washed our hair and donned unbleached garments, thinking, ‘We will light the Blessed One’s pyre,’ but were unable to light it?”

episode at length (DA 2:599). In neither passage, he was mentioned as “venerable” (*āyasmā*), as at the time of the Buddha’s visit to Ātumā, he was a novice (*sāmaṇera*) (DA 2:599). **Dullabha S 1** (A 5.59/3:78) & **Dullabha S 2** (A 5.60/3:78 f) each lists 5 things difficult to find in one gone forth in old age.

<sup>840</sup> “We were harassed,” PTS *uppadutā* wr for *upaddutā* (Be Ce), pp of *upaddavati*, “he oppresses, assails, harrasses, tyrannizes.”

<sup>841</sup> In **Cullavagga** (V 11.1/2:284), Mahā Kassapa cites this statement as good reason to hold a council for standardizing the Dhamma & Vinaya “before what is not Dharma shines out and Dharma is obscured, before what is not Vinaya shines out and Vinaya [discipline] is obscured; before those who speak what is not-dhamma become strong and those who speak what is Dharma become weak; before those who speak what is not-discipline become strong and those who speak what is Vinaya become weak.” Thus the First Council was held during the Rains Retreat following the Buddha’s parinirvana.

<sup>842</sup> This nested quote is stock: (D 16) §§3.48 = 5.144 = 6.11a = 6.20.

<sup>843</sup> It is interesting to note that neither Mahā Kassapa nor any other monks responded to the old Subhadda’s rude remark. Buddhaghosa unconvincingly explains that Kassapa was silent fearing that his reproaching Subhadda could reveal to the local people that the Sangha quarrelled in the Buddha’s absence (DA 2:601). The Skt texts and the Chinese trs give various accounts. **The Skt version** say that when a certain old monk makes an evil remark, the gods do not allow Mahā Kāśyapa’s pupils to hear it, only Kāśyapa himself hears it. **The Yo-hsing-ching** (T 1.28c13) says that when Subhadra makes his remark, Kāśyapa is disappointed. **The Pan-ni-hung-ching** (T 1.189b24) similarly says that Kāśyapa is disappointed but makes not response. **The Fo-pan-ni-huang-ching** (T 1.174c25) says that when a certain makes the evil remark, all the monks present censure him and report him to the gods, who remove him from the Sangha. Interestingly, Kāśyapa is silent here. Does this imply that Kāśyapa does not know of the incident? **The Ta-pa-nieh-pan-ching** (T 1.206c19 ff) similarly say that Kāśyapa and his followers do not respond at all, and when the “three baskets” have been compiled, he does not make any mention of the incident either. In **the Mūlasarvāstivādin version** (T 24.401a17), the gods intervene, allowing only Kāśyapa to hear Subhadra. Kāśyapa stops his journey to admonish Subhadra on impermanence. Then he says, “Enough, stop talking about this incident. We should go quickly!” Then, Kāśyapa, realizing that the long-lived gods’ concern that the “three baskets” might be reduced to ashes unless their compilation is made, proposes their compilation (T 24.402c9). Here however, it is the god’s foreboding, not Subhadra’s remark that moves Kaśyapa to hold the recital. In summary, then, we can conclude from the various versions that Kaśyapa does not ignore Subhadra’s remark, and that he does not fall back on this incident to hold the first council. However, it is curious that no mention of the First Council is made at all in this sutta: see George Bond 1982:18-22.

**An Yang-Gyu:** “In my view of the incident, as it really took place by chance around the time of the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*, the author of the Proto-MPS could not help recording it. He might think it worth recording, because this incident enables listeners to lessen their too excessive grief at the loss of the Buddha, by feeling resentment against the corrupt monk, and concern about the preserving of the Buddha’s teaching and the unity of his community in his absence” (2001:71). See An Yang-Gyu, “The date and origin of the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta,” 2001:53, 69-72.

<sup>844</sup> The following sections [§§6.21-26], on the Buddha’s cremation and distribution of his relics, are unique to this Sutta.

“Vāsetṭhas, it is because the intention of the devatas is different.”

**6.21b** “But what, bhante, is the intention of the devatas?”

“The intention of the devatas, Vāsetṭhas, is thus:

“The venerable Mahā Kassapa is journeying on the highroad from Pāvā to Kusinārā with a large community of monks, numbering some 500. So long as the venerable Mahā Kassapa had not bowed his head at the Blessed One’s feet, you would not be able to light the Blessed One’s pyre.”

“If that is the devatas’ intention, bhante, let it be so!”

**6.22** Then the venerable Mahā Kassapa approached the Makuṭa Bandhana shrine of the Mallas outside Kusinārā, and went up to the Blessed One’s pyre. Arranging his upper robe to one side [baring the right shoulder], putting his palms together lotus-like, he thrice circumambulated the pyre rightwise. The Blessed One’s feet protruded (from the pyre) and he saluted them.<sup>845</sup>

The 500 monks, too, arranging their upper robes to one side [baring the right shoulder], putting their palms together lotus-like, thrice circumambulated the pyre rightwise, and then saluted the Blessed One’s feet.

As soon as the venerable Mahā Kassapa and the 500 monks had done their salutation, the Blessed One’s pyre, of its own accord, burst into flames.

**6.23a** Of the Blessed One’s burnt up body, there was to be seen no skin, nor tissue,<sup>846</sup> nor flesh, nor sinew, nor synovial fluid; not even soot—only the relics [burnt bones]<sup>847</sup> remained.

Just as when ghee or oil is burned, neither ash nor soot remains, even so, **there was to be seen no skin, nor tissue, nor flesh, nor sinew, nor synovial fluid; not even soot—only the relics remained.**<sup>848</sup>

Of the 500 rounds of cloth,<sup>849</sup> neither the innermost nor the outermost were burned up.<sup>850</sup>

And when the Blessed One’s body had burned up, streams of water fell from the sky and put out the Blessed One’s pyre. Water from the ground and sal trees,<sup>851</sup> too, shot forth putting out the Blessed One’s pyre. The Mallas of Kusinārā, too, put out the Blessed One’s pyre with all their fragrant water.<sup>852</sup>

<sup>845</sup> **Buddhaghosa** says that Mahā Kassapa enters the 4th dhyana and uses it as the basis for a psychic feat so that the Buddha’s feet would appear out of their extensive wrappings (DA 2:603). The **Dulva**, however, says that Mahā Kaśyapa uncovers the body and worships it. Then he changes the garments that enshrouded the Blessed One with those from his own store. And when the coffin cover is replaced, fire bursts forth from the pile and consumes the body (Dulva 645<sup>b</sup> = Rockhill 144). See D:RD 2:186 n1 (qu **Spence Hardy**): “Just before a Jew is taken out of the house to be buried, the relatives and acquaintances of the departed stand around the coffin; when the feet are uncovered; and each in rotation lays hold of the great toes, and begs pardon for any offence given to the deceased, and requests a favourable mention of them in the next world” (*A Manual of Buddhism*, 1853:348).

<sup>846</sup> “Tissue,” *cammanī*, lit “hide,” but here refers to the subcutaneous layer next to the bone, “integument” (S 2:-238 = A 4:129; PvA 68). Here I have used a free tr, following Vajirā & Story (1998).

<sup>847</sup> Prior to this, the Buddha’s body is referred to as *sarīra* (singular) [§5.11]. Here the plural is used (*sarīre*), meaning “relics,” and so remains for the rest of the text. On the significance of these relics, see Schopen, “Monks and the Relic Cult in the *Mahāparibbāna-sutta*,” 1997:99-113 & Wynne, “How old is the Suttapiṭaka?” 2003:5-8.

<sup>848</sup> This important passage clearly states what remains of the Buddha’s body: one wonders how to explain the recent claims in Singapore and Malaysia of “relics” of the Buddha’s blood, veins and skin! Comy describes the Buddha relics as follows: “the relics are like jasmine buds, or washed pearls, or gold” (*sumana,makuṭa,sadisā ca dhota,-mutta,sadisā ca suvaṇṇa,sadisā ca dhātuyo*) (DA 2:603 f). On the **authenticity of relics**, Trainor notes, “I have never come across a textual account from the Theravāda tradition of any effort to distinguish authentic relics on the basis of their appearance. The relics I saw in Sri Lanka varied in appearance. Some had the brownish color and irregular surface texture that one would expect to see in old bones. Others were smoothly polished and pearly in appearance” (1997:120 n80). On relic authenticity, see **Intro (7j)** above.

<sup>849</sup> See §6.18 & Intro (7a).

<sup>850</sup> *Tesaṅ ca pañcannam dussa,yuga,satānam dve ca dussāni dayhimsu yaṅ ca sabba,abbhantarimam yaṅ ca bāhiram*. Following BE Ce *na dayhimsu*; Ee Se omits *na* (“were burnt up”). The reading *na dayhimsu* is attested by the Skt *Mahā,parinirvāṇam,sūtra* (ed Waldschmidt, 1951). J Strong suggests that the unburnt layers have to do with keeping the relics separate from the ashes of the fire (but does not mention the Pali variants). See Gethin 2008:281 n95.

<sup>851</sup> *Udaka,sālato* (Be Ee & Be at DA 604); vl *-sālake* in DA:Ee 604; these are wr for *udakam sālato* (Ce Se) (DPL). Comy gives 2 possible explanations of *udaka,sālā*: (1) the sal tree around rained miraculously from their trunks, branches and leaves; (2) water burst forth from the ground and formed a sort of ring “like a crystal diadem” (*phalika,vaṭamsaka,sadisā*) around the pyre (DA 2:604). See Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvana Sūtra*, 1944-48:

## Claims for the Buddha relics

**6.23b** Then the Mallas of Kusinārā installed the Blessed One’s relics in an enclosure [a cage] of spears, surrounding it with a wall of bows in their assembly hall. Then they honoured, served, respected, esteemed and venerated them with dancing, music, singing, garlands, and fragrances.

**6.24** Then the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was a kshatriya; I, too, am a kshatriya. I, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. I will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

Then the Licchavis of Vesālī heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the Licchavis of Vesālī sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was a kshatriya; we, too, are kshatriyas. We, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. We will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

Then the Sakyas [Śākya] of Kapila,vatthu heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the Sakyas of Kapila,vatthu sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was our foremost relative. We, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. We will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

Then the Bulis [Bulakas] of Alla,kappa [Cala,kalpa] heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the Bulis of Alla,kappa sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was a kshatriya; we, too, are kshatriyas. We, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. We will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

Then the Koliyas [Kraudyas] of Rāma,gāma heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the Koliyas of Rāma,gāma sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was a kshatriya; we, too, are kshatriyas. We, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. We will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

Then the brahmin Vetha,dīpaka [Viṣṇu,dvīpa] heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the brahmin Vetha,dīpaka sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was a kshatriya, but I am a brahmin. I, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. I will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

Then the Mallas of Pāvā [Pāpā] heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the Mallas of Pāvā sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was a kshatriya; we, too, are kshatriyas. We, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. We will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

**6.25a** When this was said, the Mallas of Kusinārā said this to the sanghas and groups:<sup>853</sup> [166]

430 & *Überlieferung vom Lebensende des Buddha*, 1950-51:430; also RO Franke, D tr: *Dīghanikāya...in Auswahl übersetzt*, Göttingen, 1913:251 n5.

<sup>852</sup> The description given in this § reflects the ritual purity of the Buddha’s death. See §6.14n above.

<sup>853</sup> “The sanghas and groups,” *saṅghe gaṇe*. “Sangha” here refer to all those who have come to have a share of the relics, except for Ajātasattu’s representative, here referred to as “group.” “Sangha” here refers to the ancient republics of the Licchavis, Mallas, etc. There is a hint of tension here, esp evident in §6.25 where the Mallas of Kusinārā refuse to give away any Buddha relics. The imminent danger of war over the relics is depicted in the bas-reliefs of the Sañcī stupa: Marshall & Foucher, *Monuments of Sāñcī*, 1940 1:112-119, 214 f, pls 15, 61; Strong 2004:119. The appeal of relics is clearly not just spiritual, but also mundane due to their portability and promise of power. See foll n on the Buddha’s awareness of this danger and how he prevented it (UA 402); see also Intro (7j).

“The Blessed One attained parinirvana within the confines of our village. We will not give away any portion of the relics.”

### Distribution of the Buddha relics<sup>854</sup>

**6.25b** When this was said, the brahmin Doṇa<sup>855</sup> said this to the sanghas and groups:

Listen, sirs, to a word from me,  
Our Buddha is a speaker [teacher] of patience.<sup>856</sup>  
It is not right that the highest individual’s  
Relics-distribution should bring strife.  
Let there be, sirs, the common good, the one path, for all:  
As avusos, let’s make eight the shares:  
Let there be stupas far and wide,  
That all have faith in the One with Eyes!<sup>857</sup>

“In that case, brahmin, divide the Blessed One’s relics into eight equal portions and distribute them!”

“Yes, sir,” the brahmin Doṇa replied in assent to the sanghas and groups, and he divided the Blessed One’s relics into eight equal portions and distributed them, saying:

“Sirs, please give me this urn [measuring vessel]. I, too, will build a great stupa over the urn.”<sup>858</sup>

And they gave the urn to the brahmin Doṇa.

**6.26** Then the Moriyas [Mauryas] of Pippali,vana heard:

“It is said that the Blessed One has attained parinirvana at Kusinārā.”

Then the Moriyas of Pippali,vana sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying,

“The Blessed One was a kshatriya; we too are kshatriyas. We, too, deserve a portion of the Blessed One’s relics. We, too, will build a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.”

“There is no more share of the Blessed One’s relics. The Blessed One’s relics have been divided up. Take from these cinders.”

And they took from those cinders.

**6.27** Then the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha built a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics.

[167]

The Licchavis, too,

built a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics at Vesālī.

The Sakyas, too,

built a great stupa over the Blessed One’s relics at Kapila,vatthu.

<sup>854</sup> The Udāna Comy gives 3 reasons why the Buddha chooses to pass away in Kusi,nārā, ie (1) it would be the occasion for teaching **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17) = SD 36.12; (2) the wanderer’s Subhadda’s conversion, and (3) the brahmin Doṇa would fairly distribute his relics, thus preventing a bloodshed (UA 402). See (**Pāda**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2:37 f) = SD 36.13 (2).

<sup>855</sup> Dona, says Comy, seizing the opportunity, hid the right eye-tooth of the Buddha in his turban, but Shakra saw this, and thinking that Doṇa was incapable of showing suitable honour to the relic, removed it and kept it in the Cūlā,maṇi Cetiya [the crown jewel shrine] in Tāvataṃsa (DA 2:609). **The Dhātu,vaṃsa** adds that Doṇa hid a second eye-tooth between his toes, and a third inside his clothing. The second was subsequently stolen by the Nāga king Jaya,sena, who enshrined in his realm, and the third, by was taken by someone from Gandhāra, who enshrined it there (Dhāt 18 f). **The Cūlā,maṇi Cetiya**, said to be 1 league high, was created by Shakra to enshrine the hair cut off by the Buddha when he donned the ascetic’s robe on the bank of the Anoma (J 1:65). After the Buddha’s parinirvana, Shakra enshrined his right collar bone there, too (BA 235; Mahv 17.20). According to Sinhala hagiography, on the request of the novice Sumana, who was sent by the elder Mahinda, it is said, Shakra handed over the right collar bone over to Sumana, but kept the right eye-tooth. The right collar bone was finally enshrined at Thūp’ārāma (VA 1:84 ff; Mahv 17.13 ff). On Doṇa, see (**Pāda**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2:37 f) = SD 36.13 (4). See also Strong 2004:119-121, 158 f.

<sup>856</sup> “A speaker [teacher] of patience,” *khanti,vādī*, an allusion to **Khanti,vādī J** (J 313) where the Bodhisattva shows the highest patience and lovingkindness against the extreme cruelty of a king against him.

<sup>857</sup> It is prob here that Doṇa is traditionally said to have recited his lion-roar, the Doṇa,gajjita (“Doṇa’s thunder”): see (**Pāda**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2:37 f) = SD 36.13 (2.2) & **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17) = SD 36.12 (1.2).

<sup>858</sup> This is the first incident of a relic theft in the Canon. See **Intro (7j)**; but cf (**Pāda**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2:37 f) = SD 36.13 (2).



|  |  |                              |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| The Bulis, too,                              | built a great stupa over the Blessed One's relics at | Allakappa.                   |
| The Koliyas, too,                            | built a great stupa over the Blessed One's relics at | Rāma,gāma. <sup>859</sup>    |
| The brahmin Veṭhadīpaka, too,                | built a great stupa over the Blessed One's relics in | Veṭha,dīpa.                  |
| The Mallas of Pāvā, too,                     | built a great stupa over the Blessed One's relics at | Pāvā.                        |
| The Mallas of Kusinārā, too,                 | built a great stupa over the Blessed One's relics at | Kusinārā.                    |
| The brahmin Doṇa, too,                       | built a great stupa over the urn.                    |                              |
| The Moriyas of Pippali,vana, too,            | built a great stupa over the cinders at              | Pippali,vana. <sup>860</sup> |
| So it was in the days of old. <sup>861</sup> |  |                              |

### Stupas over the Buddha's four eye-teeth<sup>862</sup>

- 6.28** Eight measures of relics of the One with Eyes, seven were honoured in Jambu,dīpa [India] And one measure of the highest hero was kept by the naga kings in Rāmagāma. One eye-tooth<sup>863</sup> by the Three Heavens [realm of the 33]<sup>864</sup> honoured, and one in Gandhāra revered. The victorious Kalinga king has one more,<sup>865</sup> and the nagas, too, honour one. This Mother Earth, her ground decked in their glory with the highest gifts. Thus is the One with Eyes' relics well honoured by the honoured, [168] Worshipped by the leader of the devas, by naga chiefs, and by lords of men, Their hands clasped in homage—for hard it is to find the Buddha in a hundred aeons.<sup>866</sup>

— evaṃ —

## Appendix 1

### Afterword: Buddhism after the Buddha

<sup>859</sup> **The Buddha relics of Rāma,gāma** (situated on the Ganges bank) has a fascinating history/mythology behind it, as recorded in **Thūpa,vamsa**, a late Pali hagiographical chronicle of Sri Lanka (13<sup>th</sup> cent). It recounts how the Rāma,gāma relics were washed into the waters during a great flood. The naga-king, Mahā,kāḷa, saved the relics and enshrined them in great splendour in his Mañjerika nāga abode, worshipping them with lavish offerings. See Trainor 1997:124-135.

<sup>860</sup> **Mahā.vamsa Tikā** says that the Moriyas were orig Sakya princes of Kapila,vatthu, who escaped to the Himalayas to save themselves from Viḍuḍabha's massacre, and founded a city there. As such, Asoka, the greatest of the Maurya emperors, was a kinsman of the Buddha. (MahvṬ 183). See further DPPN: Moriya.

<sup>861</sup> This seems to be the original end of sutta, and Buddhaghosa's comy ends here. Comy says that these stanzas are those of the elders at the Third Council. Comy makes no remark on the following stanzas, except saying that they were added by the elders in Lanka (DA 2:615). Rhys Davids notes that the additional verse found in the Phayre MS is in the same way probably added in Burma (D:RD 2:191).

<sup>862</sup> This stanza is added by the elders in Lanka (*Tambapaṇṇi,therehi vuttā*, DA 2:615). Interestingly, **the Dulva** (Tibetan Vinaya) stanza agrees closely here with regards to the 4 eye-teeth (Dulva f 652<sup>b</sup>; Rockhill 147). It is possible that the Sinhalese elders learn of this from the Mahāyāna (Vaipulya) tradition in Sri Lanka and incorporated it into our Sutta for the sake of completeness.

We have here two relic lists, which “bear witness to an expanding textual tradition that has recorded and thereby authenticated the dispersion of relics as new devotional centres have arisen claiming to possess relics of the Buddha” (Trainor 1997:121). Trainor uses “textual” here “in an extended sense to include a relatively fixed, orally transmitted composition” (id fn). See prec n.

<sup>863</sup> “Eye-tooth,” *dāṭhā* (f), ie a canine.

<sup>864</sup> “The Three Heavens,” *ti,diva*, poetic form for *Tāvatiṃsa* (heaven of the 33 devas) (D 2:167, 272; S v430/ 1:96, v699/1:181).

<sup>865</sup> **The Dāṭhā,vamsa** is a hagiology of how this eye-tooth that is said to have been taken to Sri Lanka by a brahmin woman in 4<sup>th</sup> cent during the reign of Sirimeghavaṇṇa, and is now kept in the Tooth Relic Temple, Kandy.

<sup>866</sup> On whether the Buddha is still living, see **Intro (9g)** & is he really dead? See **Intro (9h)**.

## 1 From light to light

World religions, after their founders' death, invariably have their disciples build on, expand and innovate on the founder's teachings. When we study or practise, for example, Theravāda today, are we practising the Buddha's teachings or following Buddhaghosa's instruction along with various Sinhalese biases and peculiarities? When we practise Chinese Buddhism are we practising our sifu's teachings or the Buddha's (they are not always the same).

Of course, there are those who say does it really matter? Religion is a person's faith, so we should be prescriptive about it. I agree, and I am not saying that we should not interpret Buddhism, but that in doing so, are we throwing the baby out along with the bathwater? If we are talking about Sakyamuni Buddha, we are not talking about Maitreya, for example (who is not yet a Buddha, anyway).

Understandably, Buddhism needs to be interpreted or adapted so that the many can understand it and so benefit from it. And yet these are provisional teachings often answering immediate needs and measuring up to the expectations and eccentricities of the audience. More importantly, such provisional teachings should be carried further leading progressively towards the true Dharma. We are not shepherds herding a flock, who end up in the slaughterhouses anyway. The Dharma teacher is like a loving and wise parent raising multitudinous children of various whims and wisdom, and we have to raise them to be healthy, happy and spiritually independent adults, singular jewels in Indra's cosmic net of jewels.

In short, basic Buddhist missiology should be two-tiered. On the worldly level, the crowd needs to be entertained with fun Dharma so that its less defilements find acceptable links with the Dharma, that is, sugar-coating the spiritual medicine for their ills. In due course, we have to teach our patients to learn to take their medicine themselves and keep to a healthy life-style.

**Buddhist missiology.** On the spiritual level, the individual must have direct access to the Dharma, either through mindfulness exercises ("meditation") and the Sutta teachings. Underlying all this, there is the sustained support of a systematic Buddhist education system and a Right Livelihood philosophy. This means that our community needs of Buddhist college, better still, a Buddhist university. The graduates from such institutions, if they choose the Buddhist ministry, should be gainfully employed by Buddhist temples, centres and groups. Such properly educated and trained ministers surely would benefit society and themselves than would the occasional self-taught gurus and self-propelled sifus.

## 2 From self-reliance to relics

The Buddha founded the world's first missionary religion: he went forth to teach the Dharma for all who would listen. The Buddha's compassion and wisdom flows in the tolerance and resilience of the Buddhist tradition. As Buddhism spreads beyond India, it adopted and adapted itself to indigenous ideas and ways. Such vitalizing developments in due course turn Buddhism into **a world religion**. Sometimes, this protean quality entails a heavy cost. More often than not, the new religious forms and ideas, directly or indirectly, contradict the teachings of the founder. Much of Tibetan Buddhism, for example, is no different from the indigenous Bon shamanism with a generous smattering of Saivism.

After the Buddha's parinirvana, the majority of his followers refuse to believe that he has really died, or that although his physical form is no more, his spiritual form still persists. The Buddha relics might have at first been regarded as the ideal objects to remember a dead teacher by, but in due course, faithful followers attribute **special powers and presence** to them. When these relics (or their replica) are enshrined in a stupa or shrine, the structure itself is regarded as the Buddha's living person or presence. The true Buddha is no more the historical Gautama, but a docetic presence or superhuman deity. The Buddha's Dharma became Buddhism.

Once spirituality is externalized or objectified, and its mythical and symbolic qualities forgotten or misconstrued, these externals next go into the "**commodity**" phase: spiritual becomes a thing that one supplicates, negotiates with, and invokes its power. The most extreme of this commodification of spirituality of course simony, religion comes to be measured in worldly and financial benefits.

## 3 Monastic business

After the Buddha's passing, especially with the rise of the more liberal Mahāsaṅghika, we see the growing laicization of monastic life. **Archaeological field work** and scholarly analyses since John Mar-

shall (mid-18<sup>th</sup> century), Alexander Cunningham (1920s), up to Gregory Schopen in our times, have shown that the monasteries openly collected money, traded, loaned money, charged interests and made “merit-making” an important part of their lives. Translated into our own times, this would refer to monastics having bank accounts, credit cards, property, expensive cars, and affairs. Perhaps they are emulating the Bodhisattva Siddhartha living in the pleasure palaces of the three seasons replete with lotus ponds. Perhaps they have yet to see the four sights. So nothing is new.

These scholars, looking at artifacts and ancient sites left behind by the worldly monastic past, have given us valuable historical evidence to mull over the fate of post-Buddha Buddhism (or at least Indian Buddhism). If such archaeology and scholarship have opened a dark window to our religious past—one of dead monks, bones, stones and monastic business—our spirituality directs us to open a different window, a bright one, indeed a door, to **the Buddha’s living word of inner peace and liberating wisdom**. For spirituality is not transmitted through relics, stupas, monasteries or worldly artifacts, but flows as spiritual lifeblood through living teachers and practitioners.

#### 4 The Dharma has ended for some, but not for others

**Gregory Schopen’s research and writing methodology** give us some insights into modern Buddhist sociology and missiology, especially in regards to modern fieldwork in Buddhism in Malaysia and in Singapore where Sinhalese Buddhism has had great social success amongst the English-speaking Buddhists and yet dismally fails to nurture local vocations even after a century of mission—in other words, the Sinhalese mission still remains a “mission,” unlike say, the Theravada Buddhism in the US or the UK where local vocations are growing with much shorter history.<sup>867</sup> It is important to remember that when the arhat **Mahinda** came to Sri Lanka,<sup>868</sup> he ordained native Sinhalas, Mahā Aritṭha and 55 of his brothers into the order at Cetiya, giri.<sup>869</sup> In due course, Anulā and her 500 companions were ordained as nuns by Saṅgha, -mittā at the Upāsikā, vihāra in Anurāda, pura.<sup>870</sup> With these events, the Teaching (*sāsana*) was established in Sri Lanka and Sinhala Sangha grew.

Such historical realities of Buddhism should be comparatively studied with the “accommodation” method of the Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) (whose work would have converted much of China if not for papal bungling) and with the “Nevius method” of the Protestant missionary John Nevius

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<sup>867</sup> H L Seneviratne, in his *The Work of Kings* (1999), asserts that a significant number of Sinhalese monks often use social service as a cover for questionable activities, “going overseas and establishing themselves in foreign lands, facilitated by both philanthropists of those lands and by expatriate communities of Buddhists. A few of these monks control vast revenues and live the life of busy executives, replete with symbols like Mercedes Benzes and BMWs and cellular phones. These monks have a foothold both in the country of their adoption and in Sri Lanka, and hold immigrant status in several countries. At the lower end of this financially comfortable class are the salary-earning monks, mostly graduates, who, especially if they also have support from laity as well as productive land, are able to invest money in business[es] like repair shops, taxi services, rental properties and tuition classes. A small minority also commercially practice astrology, medicine and various occultisms, the ‘bestly arts’ that are taboo for monks. Throughout history there were monks who practiced these, but they now do so with a new sense of legitimacy and commercialism. These come from the new definition of monk’s role as social service” (1999:336).

An important example suffices. The **Sinhalese mission** (mostly of the goyigama-caste Siyam Nikāya) in Malaysia often appears to be foreign business ventures where the local Chinese faithfuls are regarded as a rich source of religious funds and this market, nurtured and secured with a “Dale Carnegie” (win friends and influence people) approach to Buddhism. Either these missionaries deem the local followers as being incapable of learning Buddhism beyond the prescribed and popular texts or that the limited knowledge of the congregation serves their purposes better. A third possible reason, a corollary to the finance-centred goals of such missions, is that these missionaries lack the spirituality to attract and nurture such vocations. The worldliness and problems attending such a Buddhist business is reported in such works as **the Young Buddhist magazines** (1970s-80s) published by the Singapore Buddhayana Organization and edited by Ānanda Maṅgala (1917-1986, a Sinhalese monk of the Amarapura Nikāya), and more recently in works like HL Seneviratne, *The Work of Kings* (1999). A proper socioanthropological study of this situation would surely reveal interesting living parallels to Gregory Schopen’s own archaeological fieldwork on the ancient monasteries of India (see biblio).

<sup>868</sup> Dīpv 7.18-19, 12.39-54; Mahv 5.195, 13, 14; VA 61-105.

<sup>869</sup> Mahv 16.10 f; VA 82 f.

<sup>870</sup> Dīpv 15.73 ff; Mahv 15.18 f, 19.65; VA 90 f.

(1829-93) (whose work has produced phenomenal success in church growth in Korea, making it one of the largest Christian communities in Asia).<sup>871</sup>

The dead, bones, stones, and monastic businesses and affairs are still alive and well all around us today. Perhaps this is a religious response to worldly wealth, power and pleasure that religion has always been associated with throughout its history. Perhaps it is simply out of pure greed, lust and desperation that people turn to religion. However, greed, lust, desperation and their likes, are older than religion, but it is because of them that Buddhas and spiritual teachers have arisen in the world. The Dharma-ending age may have descended upon many, but for many of those who are islands unto themselves, **the Dharma still guides them** just as the Buddha himself would. It is just a matter of which direction we choose to look to.

The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta is the Buddha's last will and testament to the world. Throughout the sutta we see the Buddha as a humane being, exhorting us to keep to the timeless path of the Dharma. Even in the face of miraculous reports, we see the Buddha admonishing us to look to our inner goodness and self-power. The supreme worship is not our adoration for the Buddha, but practising the Teachings. If we like the cook's food, our hunger is never satiated by building an altar to worship the cook, whether out of gratitude or the desire for more, but to learn how to prepare that food (and share it with others), and most importantly, to eat it and live a healthy life. Without partaking of this spiritual food, one would be ever be spiritually hungry or at least under-nourished.

## 5 The engaged observer

The second millennium opened auspiciously with the publication of *Buddhist Theology*<sup>872</sup> in 2000, with which it may be said that academics who are *soi-disant* (self-proclaimed, in a fond sense) Buddhists finally came out of the closet:

...this means, first, that Buddhist theologians take some particular Buddhist tradition to be normative for them, to constrain and order their intellectual work, and to provide a technical lexicon and a set of intellectual purposes or goals. Second, it means that Buddhist theologians understand their own works to be a contribution to the development of the tradition out of which they speak, think, and write: they want, perhaps, to offer tradition-specific interpretations of or judgments about contemporary phenomena; or they want to develop the tradition's understanding of itself; or they want to apply the tradition's claims and understandings in a critical fashion to lively opposed claims and understanding found outside any Buddhist tradition.

(Paul Griffiths, review of *Buddhist Theology*, in *Journal of Global Buddhism* 1 2000:56 f)<sup>873</sup>

A growing number of the new-millennium western scholars of Buddhism feel that the best way of studying of Buddhism is by a practising Buddhism, or as Lama John Makransky (an associate professor of theology at Boston College, Massachusetts, USA, and a Dzogchen practitioner) puts it in chapter 6, "Historical Consciousness as an offering to the trans-historical Buddha" of *Buddhist Theology*:

Religious Studies, including Buddhist studies, has begun to shed light on the historical nature of Buddhist traditions, only Buddhist traditions can reflect critically upon the implication of such findings for their own systematic understandings, practice and relevance to our time.

(p1 = Jackson & Makransky, 2000: ch 6)

This approach is of at least two advantages for Buddhism and one for other religions. The interest that people have shown in Buddhism is precisely because of its "truth and transformative value" (id). Moreover, as "Buddhist theology," Buddhist scholars of Buddhism

<sup>871</sup> On the success of Ricci and Nevius, see eg David Ching, *Syncretism: The Religious Context of Christian Beginnings in Korea*: State University of New York Press, 2002 esp ch 5.

<sup>872</sup> Jackson, Roger & John Makransky (eds), *Buddhist Theology: Critical reflections by contemporary Buddhist scholars*. Curzon, Richmond, Surrey, 2000.

<sup>873</sup> *Journal of Global Buddhism* 1, 2000:56-60. <http://www.globalbuddhism.org/1/griffiths001.html>.



can now increasingly appropriate the academy's critical tools for the use of Buddhist tradition: to shine new light upon its historically conditioned patterns of thought and practice, to learn better how those inherited patterns have worked to communicate, or sometimes obscure, the truth and transformative power of Dharma, and thus, in what new ways the Dharma may need to be understood and expressed in our time.

The larger and growing number of people in contemporary cultures with serious interest in Buddhism do not look to it primarily as a basis for fascinating discussions (a primary criterion of topics selection for Religious Studies forums), but for its truth and transformative potential. They include not only those who may identify themselves as contemporary Buddhists, but prominently also Christians, Jews and others who find that Buddhist teaching or practice sheds further light for them upon the truth of their own traditions, or upon possibilities for integration of those truths into life.  
(Jackson & Makransky, op cit)

In other words, when Buddhist scholars of Buddhism study and discuss it with a significant level of academic discipline, its truth and transformative value would reach a wider audience and benefit a greater number, whether they call themselves Buddhist or not.

To keep this high academic standard, Buddhists themselves have to show a moral responsibility in their learning and teaching of the Buddhism. Buddhists have to be more aware of the implications of their historical consciousness for their own self-understanding. Very often, sadly, this is not case, Makransky observes,

For example, many of the most learned Asian Mahāyāna teachers continue to speak as if the historical Buddha personally taught the Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures, in spite of much evidence to the contrary...and to do this is to deny the historical evidence..."

(Jackson & Makransky, op cit)

Such notions fit in snugly with my own understanding of Buddhism today as "a family of Buddha-inspired religions," each member with their own memory of the father and their own way of enjoying their spiritual inheritance. No sibling in such a family should pontificate that his or her memory of the teacher is the only right one, or that the inheritance should be used in only their prescribed way. The "one way" is not a Procrustean bed of fitting fellows, but a partnership of pilgrims humbly walking towards the same goal, that is, the "one way" of spiritual transformation.

We should therefore get out of the habit of inserting our own current systematic perspective into Śākyamuni Buddha's mouth in the mistaken attempt to force such conformity.

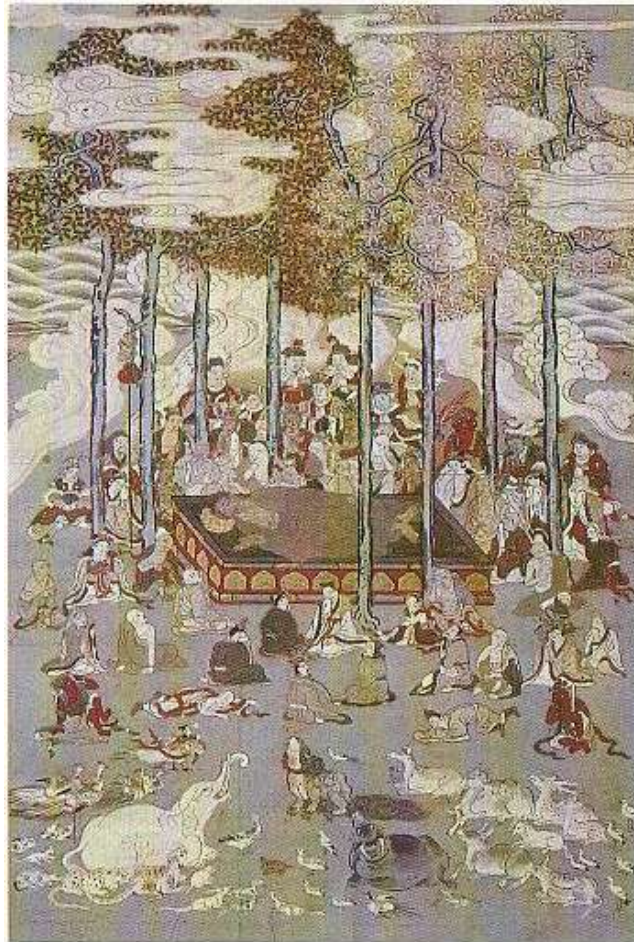
Such has been the repeated misuse of our reverence for Śākyamuni Buddha. Accomplished members of practice communities in all Buddhist cultures past and present are the actual source of our wisdom through history, yet each of our traditions has repeatedly submerged or erased many of their voices, voices of the trans-historical Buddha, for ahistorical reconstructions of Śākyamuni that support our own exclusive understanding of the moment. (Makransky,2000: 19)

In other words, there is so much we can use from the wealth of our past and present, from our innumerable teachers, and even from past and present of other faiths so that we have a better understanding of our own until the moment of our own spiritual awakening. With the Buddha's passing, the Dharma and Vinaya become the veritable transhistorical Buddha, the living teacher in our presence even as we keep to the Dharma and Vinaya. Why limit the Buddha's presence to curious relics, stony stupas and silent images when we can find his liberating "presence" in the all into which we look deeply enough? "He who sees the Dharma, sees me; he who sees me, sees the Dharma" (S 22.87.13/3:120).<sup>874</sup>

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<sup>874</sup> What is meant here is not some kind of pantheistic immanence of the Buddha, but our vision into the true nature of reality (*yathā, bhūta*) where "seeing is not by the eye but by insight" (DhsA 350). In this connection, see **Vakkali S** (S 22.87/3:119 -124) & **Vakkali-t,thera Vatthu** (DhA 25.11/4:118 f), both in SD 8.8.

□ □ □



Japanese depiction of the Great Parinirvana

## Bibliography

For other abbreviations and details, see **Textual Conventions in any of *Sutta Discovery* vols 1-4.**

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
| A      | = | Āṅguttara Nikāya (see Primary Sources).                                      |
| D      | = | Dīgha Nikāya (see Primary Sources).  |
| Divy   | = | Divyāvadāna (see Primary Sources).   |
| EB:B   | = | <i>Encyclopaedia of Buddhism</i> , 2 vols, ed Robert Buswell, 2003.          |
| M      | = | Majjhima Nikāya (see Primary Sources).                                       |
| MPS    | = | Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta or Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra [only in this study].       |
| PEGBTT | = | <i>A Pali-English Glossary of Buddhist Technical Terms</i> by Ñāṇamoli (qv). |
| S      | = | Saṃyutta Nikāya (see Primary Sources).                                       |
| T      | = | Taishō Shinshū Daizokyo. Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan Co, 1924-34.                   |
| V      | = | Vinaya (Piṭaka) (see Primary Sources).                                       |

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[References are usually to *volume:page* of the Pali text (eg S 3:79 or SN III 79). These are given in the translation at the top of the left hand page, but exact Pali page-breaks are not indicated within the text of the translation. The most useful reference, however, is: **sutta no. (section.) verse / vol:page**, eg M 35.5/1:229. For details, see Textual Conventions in any of *Sutta Discovery* vols 1-4.]

#### **A Āṅguttara Nikāya**

- A:WH **The Book of Gradual Sayings** (A:WH), tr FL Woodward & E.M. Hare, Oxford: OUP, 1932-36. [Useful only in its critical structure; its English translation is very unreliable; hence not recommended for the beginner.]
- A:ÑB **Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Anthology)** (A:ÑB), tr Nyanaponika Thera & Bhikkhu Bodhi. Walnut Creek: Altamira & Kandy: BPS, 1999. (208 selected suttas.)
- A:P **Living Word of the Buddha**, current tr project by Piya Tan, The Minding Centre, Singapore, Feb 2002 onwards. See <http://dharmafarer.org>.

#### **D Dīgha Nikāya**

- D:RD **Dialogues of the Buddha**, tr TW & CAF Rhys Davids, London: PTS, 1899-1921. [Useful only in its critical structure; its English translation is very unreliable; hence not recommended for the beginner.]
- D:W **The Long Discourses of the Buddha**, tr Maurice Walshe. Boston: Wisdom & Kandy: BPS, 1995.
- D:P **Living Word of the Buddha**, current tr project by Piya Tan, The Minding Centre, Singapore, Feb 2002 onwards. See <http://dharmafarer.org>.

#### **M Majjhima Nikāya**

- M:H **Middle Length Sayings** (M:H), tr I.B. Horner, London: PTS, 1954, 1957, 1959. [Useful only in its critical structure; its English translation is very unreliable; hence not recommended for the beginner.]
- M:ÑB **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha** (M:ÑB), tr Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, Boston: Wisdom & Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, 1995; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 2001.
- M:P **Living Word of the Buddha**, current tr project by Piya Tan, The Minding Centre, Singapore, Feb 2002 onwards. See <http://dharmafarer.org>.

#### **S Saṃyutta Nikāya**

- S:RD **The Book of Kindred Sayings**, tr CAF Rhys Davids & FL Woodward, London: PTS, 1917-30, 5 vols. [Useful only in its critical structure; its English translation is very unreliable; hence not recommended for the beginner.]
- S:B **The Connected Discourses of the Buddha**, tr Bhikkhu Bodhi, Boston: Wisdom, 2000. 2 vols.
- S:P **Living Word of the Buddha**, current tr project by Piya Tan, The Minding Centre, Singapore, Feb 2002 onwards. See <http://dharmafarer.org>.

#### **V Vinaya**

- V:H **The Book of the Discipline**. References are usually to *volume:page* of the Pali text. Tr IB Horner.

Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1952. See “The Lesser Division (Cullavagga) XI,” V:H 5:393-406. [Useful only in its critical structure; its English translation is very unreliable; hence not recommended for the beginner.]

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